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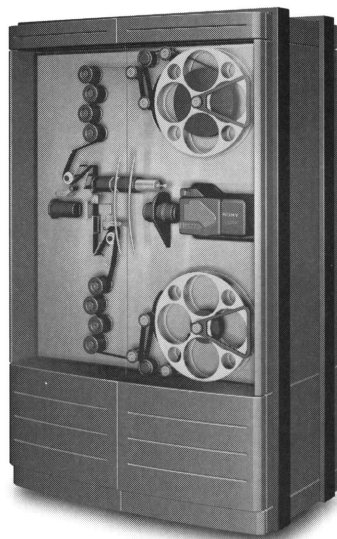


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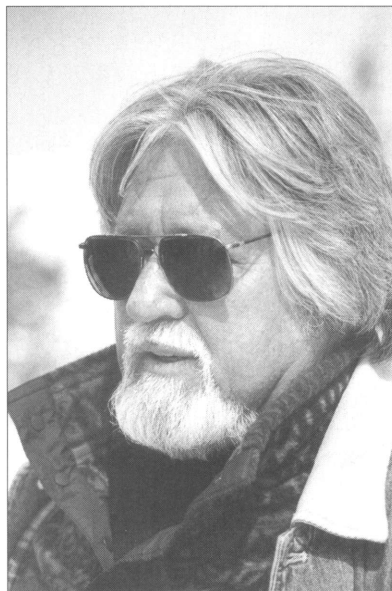
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On Our Cover:
Enigmatic rock star Brian Slade (Jonathan Rhys Meyers) vamps it up in *Velvet Goldmine*, a hallucinatory saga directed by Todd Haynes and photographed by Maryse Alberti (photo by Peter Mountain, courtesy of Miramax Films).

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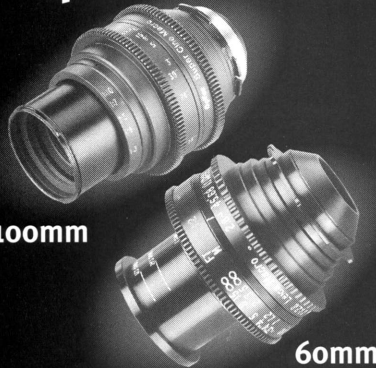
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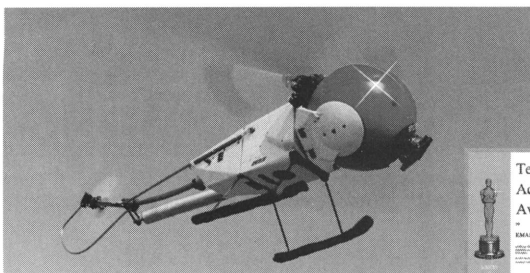
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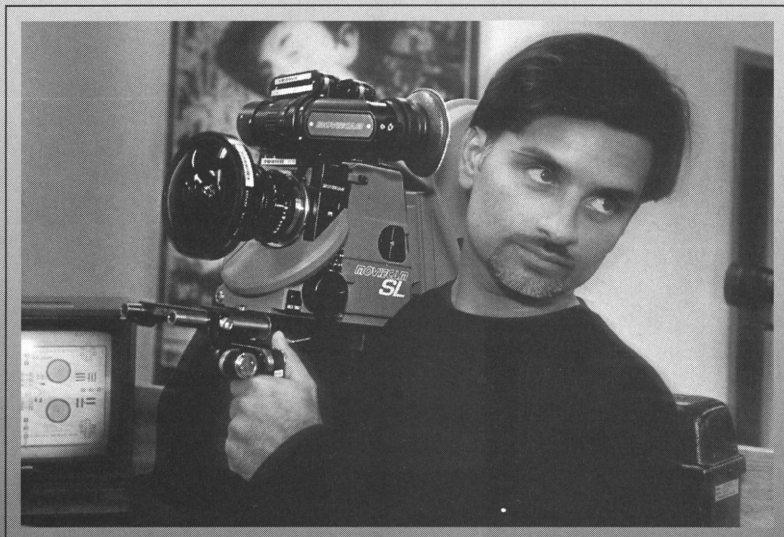
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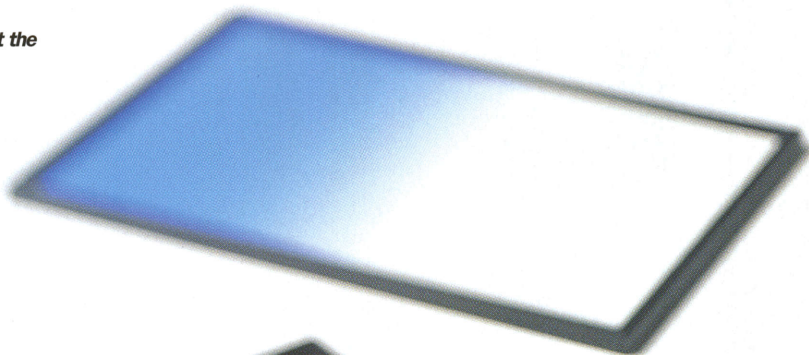
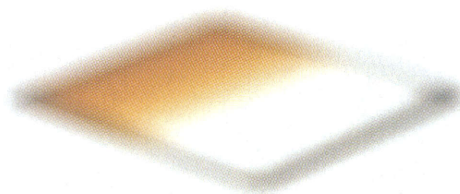
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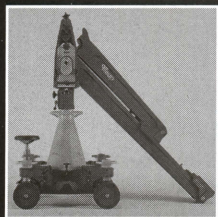
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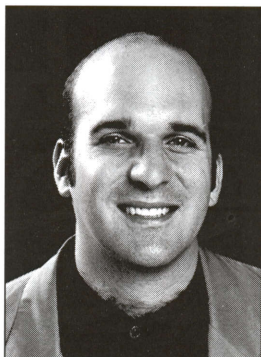


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Editor's Note



The notion that cinematography is a man's game may be supported by industry numbers, but recent years have demonstrated that female directors of photography are making significant strides. This month's cover story on *Velvet Goldmine* (page 30) showcases the imaginative work of Maryse Alberti, who was first introduced to *AC* readers in a July 1995 piece about her fly-on-the-wall photography for the brilliant documentary *Crumb*. Along with such accomplished peers as Nancy Schreiber, ASC (*Chain of Desire, Your Friends & Neighbors*), Brianne Murphy, ASC (TV pilots for *In the Heat of the Night* and *Highway to Heaven*), Sandi Sissel, ASC (*Salaam*

Bombay!, *The People Under the Stairs*), Judy Irola, ASC (*Working Girls, An Ambush of Ghosts*), Ellen Kuras (*Swoon, I Shot Andy Warhol*), Lisa Rinzier (*Dead Presidents, Trees Lounge*), Mandy Walker (*Love Serenade, The Well*), Sue Gibson, BSC (*Hear My Song, Mrs. Dalloway*) and Teresa Medina (*Female Perversions*), Alberti has demonstrated that women clearly can hold their own behind the camera. Here's hoping that more and more industry executives will recognize the artistic merits of an egalitarian landscape.

Speaking of landscapes, viewers will no doubt be impressed with the phantasmagorical vistas on display in *What Dreams May Come*, a romantic fantasy which benefits from the fine photography of Eduardo Serra, AFC (page 42) and some truly stunning visual effects work (page 52). Whether you're headed for heaven or the hot place, Vincent Ward's latest picture offers a vivid and memorable vision of the afterlife.

Pleasantville (page 60) presents a different kind of purgatory with its tale of two teenagers who become trapped in a Fifties sitcom. Director Gary Ross and cinematographer John Lindley have waged an entertaining battle between a black-and-white world and characters who crave more colorful lives; during production, the filmmakers took advantage of the latest digital tools in order to render the film's fantastic and farcical premise.

While computer techniques are clearly in vogue, they are not the only option for cinematographers striving to create unique or experimental imagery. In "Soup du Jour" (page 82), some of the industry's leading experts offer an overview of the special lab processes available to adventurous directors of photography. If you've ever wondered what *ENR* or bleach-bypass can do for you, author Christopher Probst's primer should provide ample insight.

Also in this issue, *AC* celebrates the virtues of close collaboration in "Great Relationships" (page 68), a series of mini-features celebrating a half-dozen truly inspirational teamings. Our examples span the entire history of cinema in order to illustrate the point that filmmakers' philosophical or artistic bonds have always played a key role in the creation of quality cinema.

Sincerely,

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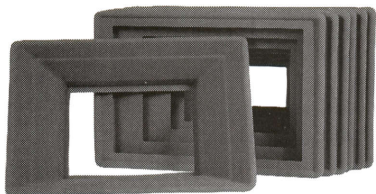


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The Post Process

The Impact of Consolidation

by Debra Kaufman

According to Jonathan Keeton, president/creative director of the San Francisco-based visual effects house Radium, "In this business, if you make a bad gamble about what system to go with, you can be in deep trouble real fast."

Everyone in the post and effects business knows that caution to be quite true. That's why the recent sale of Discreet Logic to software giant Autodesk was of no small interest to anyone invested in the technology of those companies. The San Rafael, California-based publicly held Autodesk (parent to the 3-D software company Kinetix) acquired the Montreal-based, publicly held Discreet Logic — best known as manufacturer of Flame (as well as Inferno, Fire and Smoke) — for about \$520 million in stock.

The Autodesk/Discreet deal followed close on the heels of another significant consolidation — a deal in which Avid Technology, the purveyor of digital nonlinear editing systems, acquired 3-D software developer Softimage from Microsoft, Inc. for \$285 million.

Chris Speer, president of New Media Hollywood, which provides computer-based postproduction solutions, is quite optimistic when he says that "both deals will pay off for the investor and the end user." A dealer for all four companies involved, Speer believes the Softimage acquisition to be part of the Macintosh-based Avid's strategy to make a successful leap to the NT platform. "Avid cannot just deny the fact that NT is inevitable," he points out. "They needed to protect their future and they had to come up with an NT-based product."

Though Avid chairman/CEO William Miller has stated his intent to bring both products to market, many

observers have noted that Avid's Symphony and Softimage's D/S Digital Studio have many features in common — raising the specter that Avid will squash D/S. "I don't see any products disappearing," scoffs Speer. "Avid paid way too much for the acquisition to be a ploy to kill a competitor."

Not everyone agrees with his logic, however. Keeton is of the mind that "Avid was interested in erasing its competition with Digital Studio," a point of view also emphasized by Pacific Ocean Post chief science officer Jim Fancher. Chris Gwynne, CG supervisor at Curious Pictures in New York, thinks the consolidation could be good if it "provides a tighter integration of products," but he also wonders about the fate of Softimage D/S.

Fancher logged in with a negative assessment of Softimage's future under Avid's aegis and its impact on the end user. "If I were heavily invested in Softimage and looking for my next character animation gig, the guy who's got Alias/Wavefront Maya can blow me away," he opines. "What the [Avid/Softimage] acquisition means is the potential to retard the development and release of the next version of software from Softimage that I need to stay competitive."

"Avid and Softimage still have to decide who they are," adds Keeton. "It's nowhere near as likely a mix as Discreet and Autodesk."

Indeed, considerably more enthusiasm abounded for the potential results of the Autodesk/Discreet alliance. "I'm a romantic about getting more horsepower in the hands of more people, and the price of the Kinetix seat is so appealing," notes Curious Pictures partner/executive producer Richard Winkler. "It's better for everyone if that seat could have the

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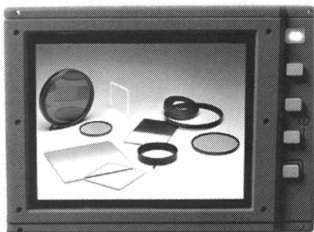
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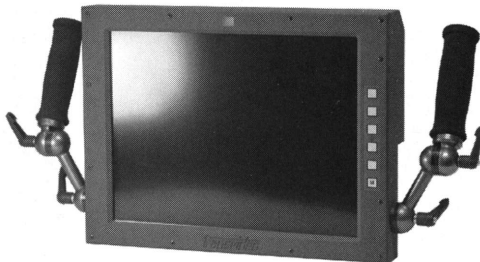
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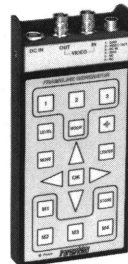
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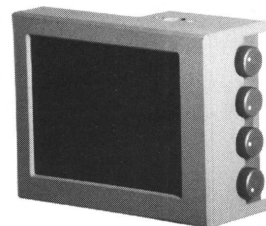
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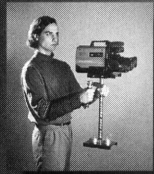
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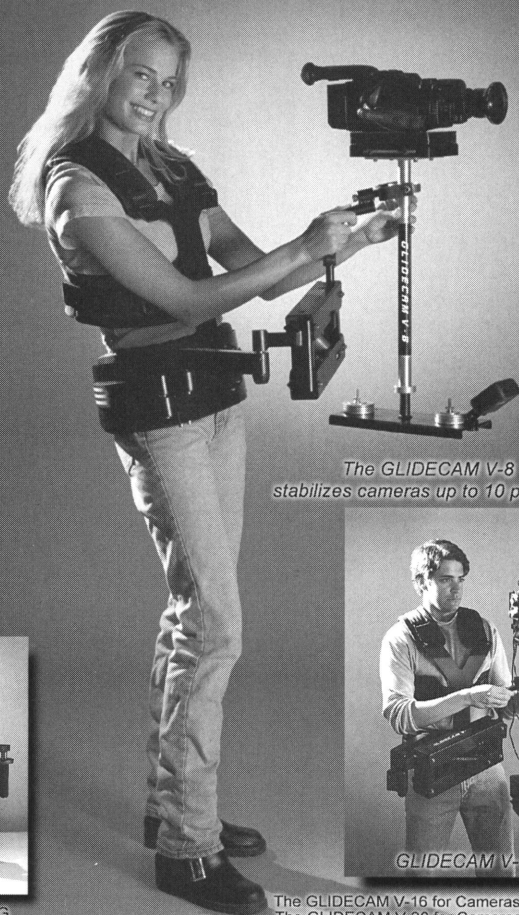
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robust compositing capability that Discreet has — it's a good combination of technology strengths."

POP's Fancher also views the deal as being beneficial to the end user. "My hope is that it will be good for post houses," he says. "Discreet will now view itself more as a software company rather than a hardware packaging outfit. My hope is that they'll design open systems utilizing their low-cost 3-D software that will take advantage of the super computer environments that we're running the high-end compositors on — and that they'll do 3-D productions systems based on network storage and computer server architectures."

But even if the two deals result in a tighter integration of toolsets, Keeton has a caveat for both sets of companies. "We don't want a machine that does everything — because getting an artist able to do 3-D, compositing, editing, painting and so on will be difficult," he warns. "Also, 3-D is slow by definition. So if you have a powerful Infinite Reality [running this combo box], and you have somebody start to model on it, you can't model one iota faster than you could on an Octane — not enough to justify the vast difference."

Another important issue is that of equipment price. For instance, industry observer Bill Ferster, developer of OnStage! previs software, holds a generally dim view of the efficacy of corporate consolidations. However, he does believe that the acquisitions will result in "high-end technology moving farther downstream, with the tools getting cheaper."

But even with the obvious tilt towards desktop technology at Discreet, there are still no guarantees. "One would only wish the price points will drop for desktop users and the high-end compositing and 2-D technology ends up in Kinetix's line," says Curious Pictures' Gwynne.

And even the otherwise optimistic Speer sounds off on a prudent note. "The [consolidations] probably bode more powerful, better solutions for the customers — yet potentially at a higher price," he says. "They'll pour hundreds of millions into R&D and come up with next generation solutions. It costs money to get better."

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Production Slate

compiled by **Andrew O. Thompson**

Queuing with the Québécois

by Andrew O. Thompson

Though the constant cloud of separatism looms large over the Canadian province of Québec, this localized threat does little to dampen the Montréal World Film Festival's reputation as a bastion of global cinema. The fest's 22nd incarnation (which ran from August 27 to September 7), opened with French-Canadian director Robert Lepage's *Nô*, a period piece set at the 1970 World's Fair in Japan and a Montréal under military occupation, while Gallic director Claude Lelouch's bitter love story *Hazards and Consequences* closed out the revelries. Also featured were focus series on Korean and Latin American cinema, as well as the well-attended, open-air Screenings Under the Stars, which included showings of *Les Misérables*, *Ma Vie en Rose*, *Ridicule*, *Microcosmos*, *Secrets and Lies* and *Intervista*. Special tributes included a retrospective of short films surveying the Canadian Film Center's 10-year history, as well as screenings of *Hiroshima Mon Amour* and *In the Realm of the Senses* in recognition of late European film producer Anatole Dauman. Also honored was Swedish filmmaker Ingmar Bergman, with screenings of *Winter Light*, *The Silence*, a candid conversational documentary, and the 1997 TV film *In the Presence of a Clown*, a project which the octogenarian professes to be his final small-screen film as a director.

Of the movies viewed by this reporter, *Affliction* and *Hold You Tight* stood out for their interesting cinematography. Another notable entry was *Passion*, a retelling of the James Cain novel *The Postman Always Rings Twice* by Hungarian director György Fehér. Shot

in black-and-white by cameraman Miklós Gurbán, HSC, this tale of a love triangle set in 1930s Hungary will be covered in an upcoming installment of Production Slate.

ing businessman's life, Whitehouse seeks the truth, only to uncover his own inner conflicts.

Though Banks's novel is set in New Hampshire, Schrader opted to



Affliction (U.S.)

Director: Paul Schrader

Cinematographer:

Paul Sarossy, CSC

Evidenced by his script for Martin Scorsese's *Taxi Driver*, writer/director Paul Schrader is no stranger to the plight of self-destructive protagonists. When one considers his directorial efforts *Patty Hearst*, *The Comfort of Strangers* and *Light Sleeper*, it's apparent that his interests lie with characters who could be considered odd even by offbeat standards. With his adaptation of the Russell Banks book *Affliction*, Schrader tackles yet another "crushed romantic" in the guise of hard-luck case Wade Whitehouse (Nick Nolte), the lone cop in the one-horse town of Lawford, New Hampshire. A perennial loser, Whitehouse is troubled by a traumatic childhood that's left him mired in the abuse of both alcohol and his loved ones. But when a baffling hunting accident claims a visit-



shoot most of the \$6.3 million film in the countryside outlying Montréal, Québec to safeguard the production against the possibility of an abnormally warm winter season. He says, "I wanted snow continuity—I did not want to get burnt with having to work around a thaw. When you get up through Québec, particularly around this mountain [St. Hillaire], it socks in heavy and hard all winter long. You don't have to worry about an early spring. Additionally, of course, the economic factors [a lucrative exchange on Canada's deflated dollar] are very, very helpful." He also found the local crews to be quite acclimatized to the inclement weather, since they tend to

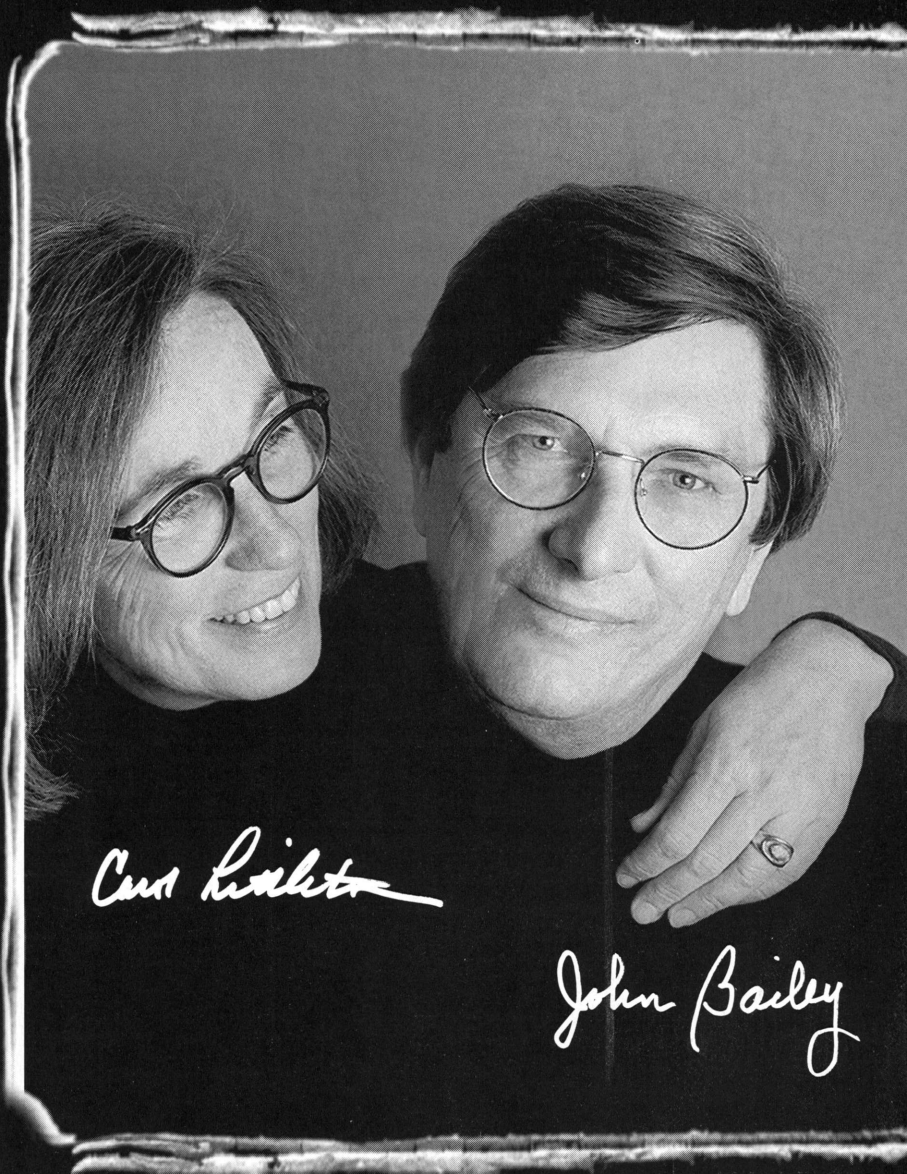
Top: Small-town cop Wade Whitehouse (Nick Nolte), his abusive father, Glen (James Coburn), and bookish brother (Willem Dafoe) pay their last respects to the deceased in *Affliction*, a film based on the novel by Russell Banks. Bottom: Director Paul Schrader and actor Nick Nolte brave the frigid elements while on location in Montréal, Québec.

ON FILM

John Bailey, ASC
Carol Littleton, ACE

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John Bailey and Carol Littleton married nine years after meeting in Italy. Their collaborations include *The Big Chill*, *Silverado*, *Swimming to Cambodia*, *China Moon* and *The Accidental Tourist*. Bailey also photographed *Ordinary People*, *American Gigolo*, *In the Line of Fire*, and *As Good as it Gets*. Littleton also edited *Body Heat*, *E.T.: The Extraterrestrial*, *Grand Canyon*, *Places in the Heart* and *Benny & Joon*.



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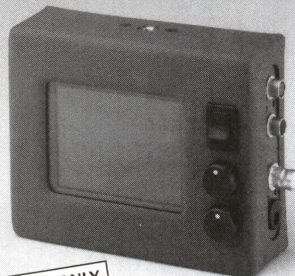
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The troubled Wade reveals his personal demons to his ever-tolerant girlfriend, Margie Fogg (Sissy Spacek). Schrader decreed that all interiors should be lit like caves where people hibernated during winter.

service productions shooting in Arctic areas. This hardness came in handy during the one week of night exteriors, when temperatures dropped to -40°C with the wind chill factor. To match the mountainous terrain of New Hampshire, Mount St. Hillaire was filmed from multiple vantage points. In the resulting footage, the surrounding flatlands appeared to be in a valley. In pulling off this geographical illusion, the filmmakers even went so far as to cheat reverse coverage by having vehicles travel in the opposite direction.

For perspectives on snowbound shooting, Schrader referenced such pictures as *The White Dawn* and *Map of the Human Heart* in his preparatory talks with director of photography Paul Sarossy, CSC (*Speaking Parts*, *Exotica*, the upcoming *Felicia's Journey*), who earned Best Cinematography honors for *Affliction* at last year's Valladolid Film Festival. In February of 1997, when the Canadian cameraman embarked on this 35-day shoot, he had just finished a film complicated by issues of severe snow conditions. Coincidentally, that project was an adaptation of another Russell Banks novel — Atom Egoyan's *The Sweet Hereafter* (see Prod. Slate, AC Dec. '97) — which endured five days of exteriors in the wilds of Merritt, British

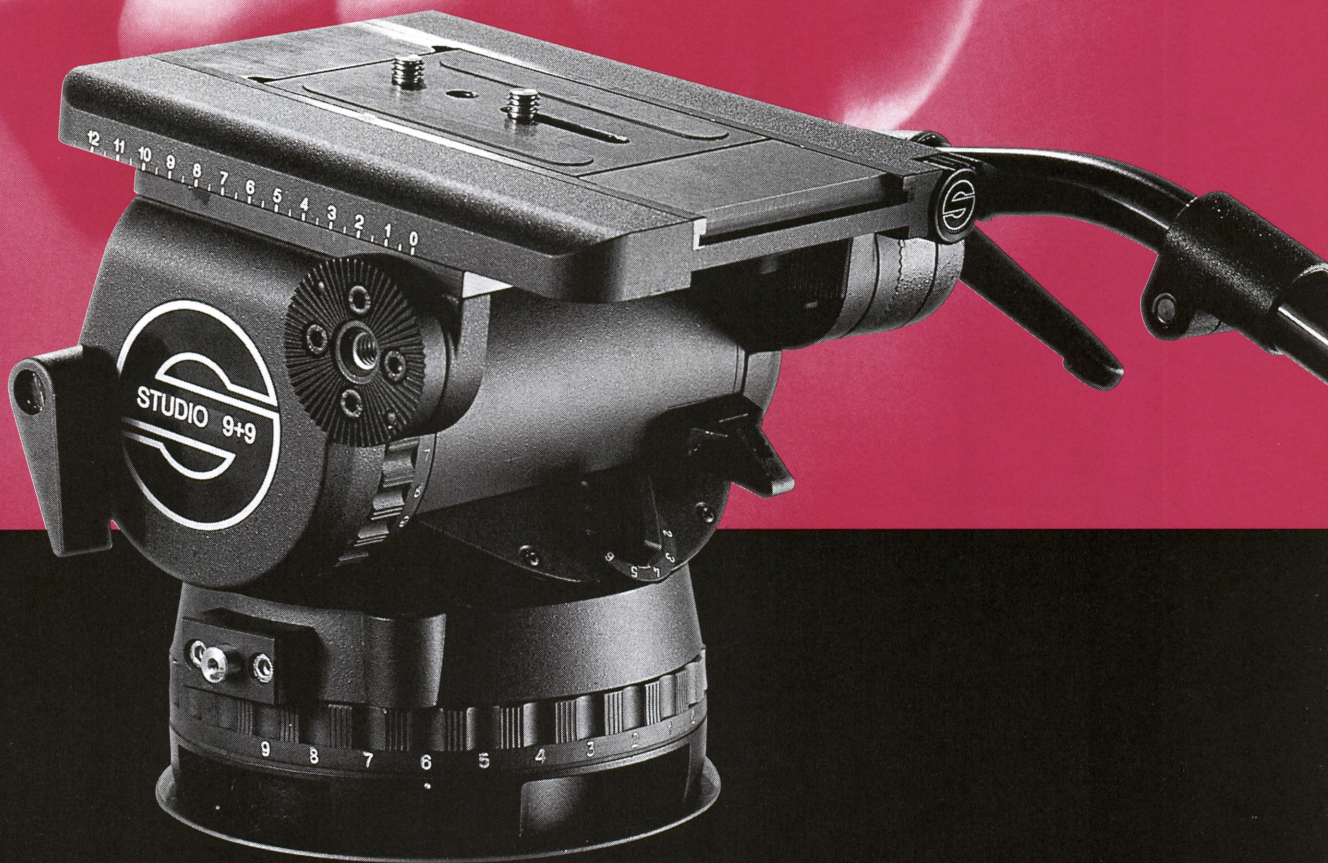
Columbia. Notes Schrader, "With the color of snow cover, you have a world of white, which is very tricky because of all the bounce. For contrast, I wanted to make the interiors like caves where people hibernated during the harsh winter. That indicates a certain coloration in the production design and that a lot of the lighting should come in from the outside."

The director preferred that exteriors be biased blue in contrast to the warmly lit interiors. Sarossy, who shot the picture with Panaflex GII and spherical Primos, using Fuji F-500 8571 for nights and day interiors, and F-125 8531 for day exteriors, explains that this dynamic "was established in a scene that finds Wade visiting his parents on their remote farm. Having run out of heating fuel, the interior needed to look cold. Whatever light was coming in from the wintry outside was only half-corrected with an 81EF filter. As a result, the tungsten interior lights are half-warmed. With no correction, the outside goes even bluer.

"Blue was important in dealing with one of our trickier sequences — a car-chase scene at night. Generally, these scenes pose no great lighting problems, but ours was to take place in the inky blackness of a forest road winding

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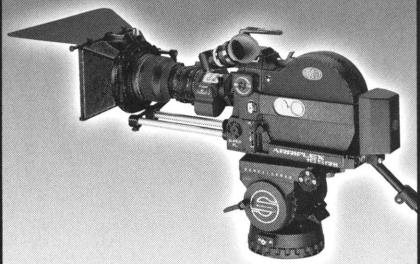
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up a mountain. It's the classic cinematographer's dilemma: what light source can you justify in the unlit countryside? If it's the moon, it must equally cover vast stretches of scenery, which is easy enough if your scene is on a single location. However, in a chase lasting several minutes, you cover a vast region, which would be difficult to light in a convincing fashion.

"The solution was to begin the scene in the last moments of dusk, and play it day-for-night, letting the geography be shown in the dim twilight. Paul [Schrader] happily solved the end of the sequence by having the final confrontation set in front of a heavy vehicle storage depot ringed by security lights. The trick was finding an appropriate point to transition between the two. This was created with herky-jerky close-up shots of the drivers photographed using poor man's process in a neighboring garage."

Wade's fragmented psyche is conveyed visually via several techniques. The cop's reconstruction of the hunting "accident" is seen in black-and-white to indicate his paranoid perception of the event. His haunting impressions of childhood manifest themselves in grainy, desaturated, low-angle shots which Schrader describes as "somewhere between memory and a home movie." Comments Sarossy, "Originally, Paul wanted to do the childhood sequences in Super 8, the theory being that its look recalls the Fifties, the period of [Wade's childhood]. However, I worried that Super 8 would look too distinctive and therefore be restrictive. I then convinced Paul to use a technique that we had done on [French-Canadian director Denys Arcand's] *Love and Human Remains*, which entailed shooting in 16mm and then rephotographing its projected image. This would give us a greater amount of control over the image."

Adds Schrader, "In the case of handheld 16mm with a lot of zooms and jerky pans, it's almost impossible to follow focus perfectly, so we have shots where the focus is always changing — it's very rough-and-tumble. When doing those shots, I would sometimes give [either Sarossy or camera operator

Robert Stecko] a little push so the shot wouldn't be *too* smooth. The 16mm footage was photographed at two stops over, and then printed down. We then projected it with a long throw onto a screen, and rephotographed it in 35mm with a zoom. We would sometimes override the zooms on the 16mm footage with yet another zoom. That way, we could move forward exponentially, zooming in so fast that grain is literally popping in front of your eyes by the time you are zooming in the second time. You get a reasonable shock because the grain almost goes to pieces, creating a sense of terror and fear."

Having honed his directorial skills prior to the days of video assist, Schrader believes that the camera operator's purpose is to make the final call on the shot. He prefers to work in the English style, with the operator handling composition and framing while the cinematographer concentrates on the lighting. Opines the director, "In some ways, an operator is the person closest to the performers. He's actually watching the performers live, through that flickering eyepiece. Often you can use your operator to communicate certain things to the actors, because they feel that the operator will tip them off if something is going wrong." Typically, Sarossy operates his own camera, and this methodology required some adjustment on his part.

Aside for the jittery gyrations captured during Wade's childhood flashbacks, camera movement was kept quite minimal. Schrader explains, "For a number of films I was under the influence of Bernardo Bertolucci and that type of stylized world. But now with the proliferation of MTV and commercial-driven cinematography and direction, those games aren't as fun any more because everyone is using them. The currency has become so debased that it seems like self-serving gamesmanship. With *Affliction*, I made a very conscious effort to step back and not do as much with the camera. At this point, in the evolution of directing, probably the most radical thing one can do is to put the camera on a tripod."



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***Hold You Tight* (China)**

Director: Stanley Kwan

Cinematographer:

Kwan Pun-Leung

The lyrical plot of *Hold You Tight* unfolds both before and after the death of business executive Ah Moon (Chingmy Yau), who perishes on an ill-fated flight from Hong Kong to Taiwan. Helmed by Chinese director Stanley Kwan (*Love Unto Waste*, *Rouge* and *Red Rose, White Rose*), the film examines the tumultuous lives of those touched by Ah Moon's aura. Left in her wake is her workaholic husband Fung Wai (Sunny Chan), an obsessive computer programmer who

Though *Hold You Tight* signals the feature debut of cameraman Kwan Pun-Leung, he had already established the director's trust during their collaboration on the documentary *A Personal Memoir of Hong Kong: Still Love You After All*, Stanley Kwan's personal ruminations on the city's changing state for Taiwanese TV. Pun-Leung hails from a background in still photography; after studying at Hong Kong's School of Technical Arts, he went to work for the publications *City Magazine* and *Cross-Cultural Magazine*, winning Agfa's Young Photographer Award in 1994. He has done still photography for theater, fashion, music videos and motion pictures, the latter including

medium to express topics of another. Nowadays, we are living in an era of visual mixtures."

Their prior relationship notwithstanding, the pair planned the film's visuals in a relaxed, instinctive manner. The director took Kwan Pun-Leung on informal scouting trips, where he would ask the cameraman which moods each specific site evoked in him. Kwan Pun-Leung elaborates, "In preproduction, Stanley brought me to gay bars, like Why Not and Club Funky [which was used as a location in the film], and we would talk about the feelings of these places. Before shooting scenes set in a pub, we would meet there, have a couple of



Above: Business exec Ah Moon (Chingmy Yau) enjoys an erotic elevator ride with lustful lifeguard Jie (Ko Yue-Lin) in Stanley Kwan's *Hold You Tight*. Cameraman Kwan Pun-Leung favored a greenish-yellow sheen for scenes indicating sexual desire. Above right: Work-weary programmer Fung Wai (Sunny Chan) mourns the absence of wife Ah Moon following her tragic death in a plane crash. Right: Ah Moon demands attention from her remiss spouse.



Photos by Tang Chak Shun, courtesy of Golden Harvest.

notices her presence more now that she's gone, and Jie (Ko Yue-Lin), a lonesome lifeguard whose lustful affair with Ah Moon lent a fleeting meaning to a wayward existence — unaware of her death, he merely thinks she has disappeared until he surreptitiously overhears Fung Wai lamenting his loss to Tong (Eric Tsang), an openly gay entrepreneur. The grief-stricken Jie later runs into Ah Moon's friend Rosa Gao (Chingmy Yau, again), who implores him to reveal his romance with her to Fung Wai.

Wong Kar-Wai's *Days of Being Wild*. He has also just completed directing a documentary on the making of *Happy Together*, which was also helmed by Wong. "Every time I face a new medium or subject matter I need to find a completely new approach to express it — this becomes a self-training process to me," notes the cameraman, who is also teaching photography in the School of Creative Media of City University in Hong Kong. "I sometimes find it interesting to use techniques I learned from one

drinks, and discuss the shots and camera angles in the actual location. In the days of scouting, Stanley would tell me stories about himself and his lovers, which in certain ways reflected on the characters in the film. Sometimes he would ask me if I had to be one of the characters, which one would I choose. By doing so, I think he was directing me to feel for the characters."

Hong Kong's strict location permit regulations often dictated Kwan Pun-Leung's choices in equipment. The

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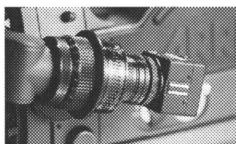
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cameraman explains, "I primarily used an Arri BL-4, but in locations like the MTR [mass transit railway] and the airport, I used an Arri 35-III instead. Filming is not allowed in those locations, so shooting conditions were very difficult — sort of hit-and-run, hide-and-seek situations — so I needed a very mobile camera. The BL-4 would also be too top-heavy to use when shooting handheld in the cramped MTR compartments. I wouldn't be able to obtain steady shots with the train swinging around as it turned through its travels."

In terms of blocking, one of the director's recurring motifs is to compose a medium shot in which a character is framed within the arch of a doorway, so as to display the space between the intervening rooms. Given the erratic emotional states of the film's protagonists, this helps to signify their sense of isolation and transition. Notes the director, "In my previous movies, I'd found that I was not very good at showing the relationship between the space and the characters. Many times, I'd unintentionally fall into close-ups on the actors and actresses. So for this film, I was more conscious to tell the audience what the space is about and what the relationship between them is."

Kwan Pun-Leung had hoped to utilize bleach-bypass processing on the film, but the plan was abandoned due to budgetary reasons. Only the opening sequence — featuring Ah Moon at Hong Kong's Kai Tak Airport — was subjected to the procedure. Though part of the film consists of flashbacks of Ah Moon and Fung Wai's rocky marriage, the director did not wish to differentiate the time periods' photography because he felt it would compromise the script's time-tripping structure. As a result, Kwan Pun-Leung had to rely more on contrasting colors (through the Kodak Vision 500T 5279 stock) to signify the appropriate temporal subtext. The cameraman submits, "Typically, I use lighting to describe a character's psychological state, or to set up a scene's atmosphere. When Wai was talking with Tong about Ah Moon's death in the corridor of the couples' new apartment, I used a rather

strong sunlight effect on Wai, which made him seem pale and somewhat weak. I used this technique again in Club Funky when Jie was sitting in the corner [despondent over the loss of Ah Moon]. The lighting suggested that Jie was forced to make a confession [about his affair with her] while Rosa remained in darkness.

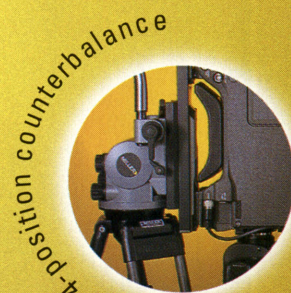
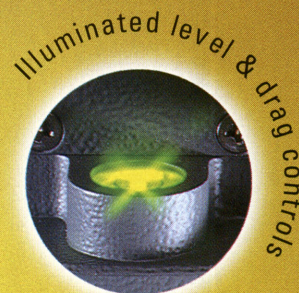
"There were two colors that I took special care with — purple blue, which I used for moonlight and dawn, and a greenish yellow light, which I used in most love scenes and whenever sexual desire was implied, except for the love between the married couple. For the sequence in which they are moving out of their old apartment, the scene begins with them in two separate spaces. Wai is in a bluish room packing his computer discs, and Ah Moon is at the other end of the apartment. When they start to quarrel face to face, I put Wai in front of a blue background and Moon in front of a warm background, to keep them separated. Even after they move into their new apartment, I kept them spatially separated until the first time Ah Moon enters Wai's room, sits in front of his computer and cries. At that point they are together again."

Likewise, Kwan Pun-Leung utilized distinct shooting styles on different characters. To reflect Jie's anxiety-ridden rebelliousness, the cinematographer employed jumpy, unsettling camera moves. In other scenes, static yet off-kilter angles also came into play, including some dutched perspectives on Tong as he lounges alone in his lavish apartment. According to Stanley Kwan, "This is a means developed by myself and Kwan to inform the audience of people's uncertainty, which is prevalent in regard to all of the sexuality issues within the film."

Rather radical swaying is apparent during a scene in which Ah Moon and Jie drive up to a mountain peak during their first date; the POV on them from in front of their car's grill careens from side-to-side as if the camera was fastened to a pendulum. Explains Kwan Pun-Leung, "I set the camera at the end of another car driving in front of theirs, with the camera low enough to see the

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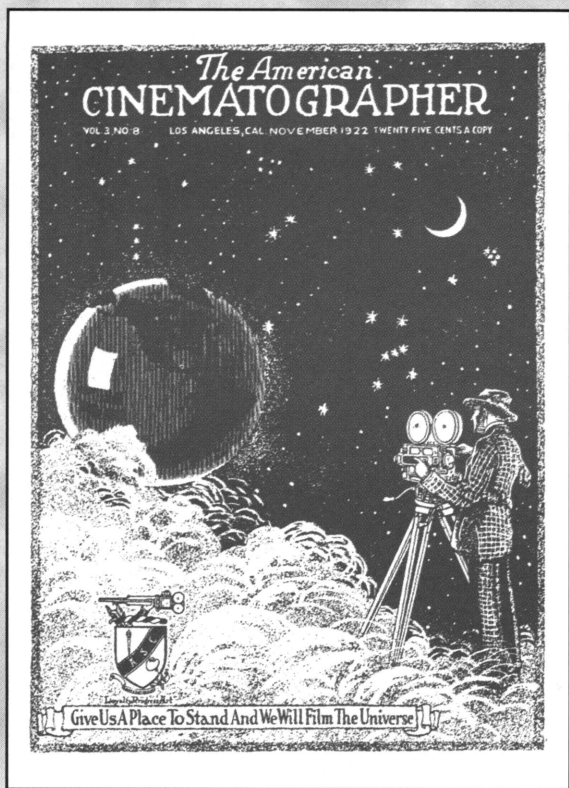
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bluish sky right after sunset and the leaves along the road. I fixed a dutch head to the camera and combined two fluid heads together in order to achieve the side-to-side movement. Instead of controlling the head’s movements by the two handles, I put my arms around the camera tightly. That way I could directly transfer my feelings to the camera. The road to the peak had lots of curves, so I followed my instinct and swung the camera to react to the curves. When Stanley looked at his monitor, he said the shots felt like rollercoaster ride. The only problem came about because of the road’s rough surface. I had my eye pressed so tightly against the viewfinder that after shooting it was all red, as if someone had punched me!”

L. A. Indie Film Fest

The Los Angeles Independent Film Festival (LAIFF) is now calling for submissions for its fifth annual event, which will be held from April 15-20, 1999. The festival showcases the best in independent cinema from around the country. Full-length feature films, shorts and documentaries that were completed after January 1, 1996 can be submitted on ½" VHS tape. Filmmakers must have a 16mm or 35mm print available for exhibition. Submissions will be accepted up until January 16. For further information or a submissions application please call (323) 951-7090. The LAIFF website can be found at www.laiff.com.

Short Film Showcase

The Griffith Place Film Division has announced a submission call for their autumn program of Hollywood Shorts, a monthly short-film series which introduces new films and filmmakers to the Hollywood community. Three shorts will be featured per month, and this quarter’s upcoming showings will occur on November 15 and December 13. All entries must be submitted on VHS tape and must run no longer than 40 minutes. They can be filmed in any format and will grouped in the following genres: drama, comedy, animation and documentary. All entries must be accompanied by a personal résumé, a one-page movie



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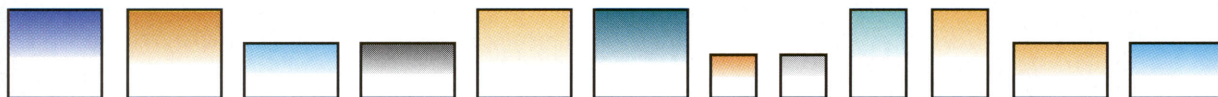
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outline, cast list, production stills, and a \$5 processing fee. Each director selected will have the opportunity to hold a brief Q&A period after their picture's screening. Applicants will be notified of acceptance into the December screening at least three weeks prior to the screening date in order for those residing outside of the L.A. area to arrange travel plans. Tapes should be submitted to Ms. Kimberly Browning, Hollywood Shorts, 11166 Burbank Blvd., North Hollywood, CA 91601; (310) 358-7634; e-mail: grifplace@aol.com.

Gordon Parks Awards

The Independent Feature Project (IFP), in association with MTV Films, Nickelodeon Movies, Paramount Pictures and Showtime Networks, has announced the winners of the two 1998 Gordon Parks Independent Film Awards. A Director's Award was given to Craig Ross, Jr. for his film noir work-in-progress *Cappuccino*, the story of an up-and-coming young married writer's obsession with a mysteriously alluring woman. Finalists in that category included Lee Lew-Lee (*All Power to the People*, feature documentary), Sterling Macer, Jr. (*Park Day*, feature), Cauleen Smith (*Drylongso*, feature), Darryl LeMont Wharton (*Detention*, work-in-progress), Patrice Mallard (*Mute Love*, work-in-progress), Stacey L. Holman (*Girl Talk*, short), and Z. Cathleen Campbell (*Away in a Manger*, short). The Screenwriting Award was bestowed upon Tamika Lamison for her script *The Jar By the Door*, a dramatic comedy about nine New Yorkers struggling to find meaning and love, whose lives are already altered by a thread of loneliness that connects them over the course of a week. The runners-up in the script category were Z. Cathleen Campbell (*Death Takes a Holiday*), Myla Churchill (*The Judgement Days*), Charles Hall (*Wash My Feet Baby!*) and Marlon Jamal (*The Wretched*).

Created to heighten awareness of new African-American independent cinema, the Gordon Parks Awards were established last year at the Independent Feature Film Market, at the impetus of MTV Films. To be eligible, filmmakers

must be IFFM participants. Scripts, works-in-progress, features and short films may all compete. Each award winner receives a \$10,000 cash prize, as well as an invitation to discuss distribution with one of the participating Viacom divisions. In addition to a screening at the IFFM, the Director's Award film receives a public screening at Independents Night!, a monthly series presented by the IFP and the Film Society of Lincoln Center. These awards are named in honor of world renowned photographer Gordon Parks, who helped initiate the introduction of black directors to Hollywood. Parks's acclaimed 1969 film *The Learning Tree* was the first studio-financed film by a black filmmaker. But it was the huge commercial success of his 1971 film *Shaft* that brought Parks international recognition as a director. He went on to direct other successful films, such as *Shaft's Big Score* and *Leadbelly*. This year's jury consisted of Mr. Parks, filmmakers Neema Barnette and Charles Burnett, DEF Pictures President Preston Holmes, Harvard Professor of African-American Studies Cornel West and Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright August Wilson.

For more information, contact Karen Schwartzman, IFP Program and Membership Director at the IFP, 104 West 29th Street - 12th Floor, New York, NY 10001, (212) 465-8200, fax (212) 465-8525.

IDA/Kodak Product Grant Winners

Documentarians Charles Clemmons, Ana Coyne Alonso, Ramy Katrib and the team of Sven Berkemeir and Rich Samuels have been named the 1998 recipients of Kodak Project Access — the International Documentary Association/Kodak Product Grant Program. The five filmmakers were chosen by an IDA blue-ribbon panel to receive grants that will enable them to produce nonfiction projects on film. "These product grants provide much-needed encouragement for nonfiction filmmakers whose passion and commitment to important projects are limited by the restraints of tight budgets," explains IDA Executive Director Betsy A. McLane. "These grants

are designed to allow those filmmakers to bridge the budget gap and originate on film."

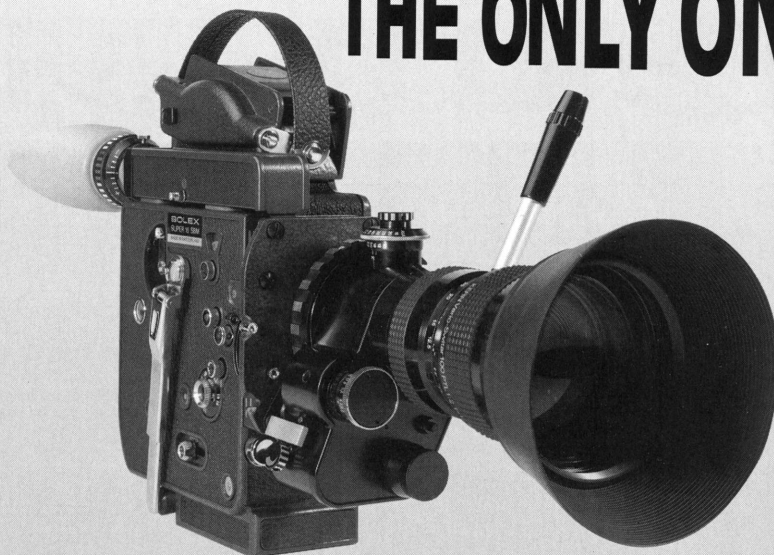
Alonso is a New York-based documentary filmmaker whose project, entitled *Shooters*, will chronicle the aftermath of an incident concerning a photojournalist shot while on assignment on Israel's West Bank. During his year-and-a-half recuperation in a Paris hospital, the photojournalist decided to return to Israel to find the soldier who shot him. Katrib is an L.A.-based director whose *Proton Beam Therapy: Medicine on the Cutting Edge* will document the history, current status and future applications of this form of medical treatment, and feature an explanation of the complex procedure and its benefits, as well as real-life patient stories. Also headquartered in the City of Angels is Berkemeier/Samuel Productions, whose film *Shooter* will portray the extraordinary relationship between British journalist Robert Yager and the L.A. street gang Westside Playboys. Clemmons submitted his proposal on behalf of the Connecticut-based Wiltonwood Productions, Inc. for *Mystic Voices: The Story of the Pequot War of 1636-1637*, which will chronicle the first skirmish between Native Americans and European colonists.

Says Michael Zakula, Hollywood Region TV segment manager for Kodak's Professional Motion Imaging department, "If you are going to put your heart and soul into a project, you want to end up with a film that you can project at festivals, and you want it to be on a medium that will be compatible with future as well as current television transmission and display systems. Film is also much more durable than tape, so you know you are producing something that will be more of a permanent record of your work. We want to thank the IDA and its members for administering this grant and for their dedication to the pursuit of excellence."

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Glitter Gulch

Director Todd Haynes and cinematographer Maryse Alberti trace the rise and fall of a glam-rock enigma.

by Chris Pizzello

Photography by Peter Mountain



In between the lingering hangover from Sixties psychedelia and the banality of the late Seventies disco era, pop music entered into a strange new world of truly progressive sounds, outrageous fashion and even bolder inversions of sexuality and identity. Spearheaded by such pop icons as David Bowie, Iggy Pop, Lou Reed and Bryan Ferry, the glam-rock movement was doomed to a short life; like almost all provocative trends of the time, it was eventually drowned by the tide of

crass commercialism that swamped the 1980s. But glam did provide a few years of unforgettable high theater that continues to echo and reverberate in the more stylish performers of the modern era.

Velvet Goldmine writer/director Todd Haynes, a passionate rock-music aficionado who grew up in Southern California, discovered the glam movement a few years after the fact, but says that the songs still had a powerful effect on him. "For Americans, glam rock was a bit different than it was for the British, because it didn't have the same sort of mainstream success over here in the States," he says. "I got to know about it a bit later, when I was in college. What was really interesting to me was the degree to which it was all happening at the same time, and how artists banked off each other's ideas. David Bowie was really involved in the production of a lot of people's music, like Lou Reed's *Transformer* and Iggy Pop's *Raw Power*. He really had his finger in a lot of pies."

Although Haynes stresses that his film is not a note-by-note retelling of Bowie's early Seventies golden years, he admits that it is loosely inspired by the curious friendship that was struck between Britain's Bowie, the consummate stylistic chameleon, and American wild-man Iggy Pop, the rocker's rocker. In a story structure that winks cheekily at the venerable classic *Citizen Kane*, budding journalist Arthur Stuart (Christian Bale) is sent by his editors to interview former contemporaries of once-legendary glam-rock superstar Brian Slade (Jonathan Rhys Meyers), who has seemingly disappeared into the obscurity of a gloomy, weirdly Orwellian Eighties landscape. Through the reminiscences of sources such as Slade's ex-wife, Mandy (Toni Collette), his former manager, Jerry Devine (Eddie Izzard) and artistic muse Curt Wild (Ewan McGregor), Stuart gradually

unveils an enigmatic, impressionistic portrait of fallen glamour.

"To me, *Citizen Kane* represents the classic structure of a Hollywood film which examines a famous, mysterious figure but is ultimately never able to define who he is," Haynes says. "In *Citizen Kane*, the result is all of these conflicting points of view, and this final hanging question of what 'Rosebud' means. That film proves that you can never really know anyone onscreen — and maybe no one in life, either — in some absolute, total way. That's the only way I could imagine approaching a film about a famous rock star. It wasn't my intention to presume this intimate knowledge of his private world, but more to look at him through the layers of people who knew him and the fans who followed him."

The director turned to cinematographer Maryse Alberti to translate his ambitious script to the screen. A longtime Haynes collaborator and Bowie admirer, Alberti jumped at the chance. The cinematographer had previously collaborated with Haynes on his experimental feature debut, *Poison*, and his short *Dotty Gets Spanked*. Alberti's other feature credits include *Zebrahead* and Todd Solondz's recent *Happiness*, and she has also lent her talents to the documentaries *Paris is Burning*, *Confessions of a Suburban Girl*, *Crumb* (which earned Best Documentary and Best Cinematography awards at the 1995 Sundance Film Festival, see AC July '95) and the Oscar-winning *When We Were Kings*.

Ironically, Alberti had just finished working with Bowie on a forthcoming Michael Apter-directed documentary about artists' inspirations when she got the call from Haynes about *Velvet Goldmine*. "I was a great fan of Bowie in the early Seventies," the French-born Alberti says. "It was the music of my generation. He's just an amazing man. At the time of the documentary, every-

Rock god Brian Slade (Jonathan Rhys Meyers) makes a spectacular entrance during a fateful concert. In their depiction of the film's flamboyant characters and milieus, Haynes, Alberti, production designer Christopher Hobbs, costume designer Sandy Powell and hair and makeup stylist Peter King drew liberally from the glam-rock aesthetic established by such real-life stars as David Bowie, Brian Ferry, Lou Reed and Iggy Pop.



Photos courtesy of Miramax.

Glitter Gulch

Right: Slade, resplendent in his feathery, form-fitting costume, flashes his fans the sulky pout of a true star.

"Glam rock drew from a lot of references — old-fashioned ideas of Hollywood glamour mixed in with futuristic notions of the space age," notes Haynes. Below: The in-crowd indulges in some decadent posturing at the "Posh Hotel." The director got the idea for this scene from an infamous true incident in which David Bowie, Lou Reed and Iggy Pop preened for journalists at London's Dorchester Hotel.

body was asking him for the rights to use his music in *Velvet Goldmine*, and he kept on saying no. I tried too, of course, and he said, "Oh, not you too, Maryse!"

While Alberti's knowledge of and affection for glam rock certainly was a helpful factor in her understanding of the script, Haynes says that other personality factors also came into play on *Velvet Goldmine*. "I like Maryse's style as a person, so our working relationship has a great deal to do with the fact that we communicate very well," the director comments. "One thing I've noticed about Maryse is that she creates an atmosphere on the set among her crew and particularly among actors that's extremely trusting. She's done films with me that have contained demanding content for actors — sexually or otherwise — and I think they trust her. They feel a kind of security with her that they might not feel in an all-male, macho kind of environment."

"On my film *Poison*, I remember her being extremely comfortable with gay male sexuality, when at that point I thought that most women felt excluded from it. I always felt that she could kind of enjoy it. It was sexy to her to watch it, and it definitely shows [in her cinematography]. I think she made it accessible to audiences beyond a gay male



audience, which is great. Women in particular have found the films of mine with gay content extremely erotic, which is surprising to me! *Velvet Goldmine* deals with androgyny and turning men into sexual objects, really, so Maryse was the ideal person for the job."

Since the backdrop of the early Seventies glam rock scene in London was being used by Haynes as a mere jumping-off point for some very fertile flights of imagination, a healthy preproduction period was necessary for Alberti to get a handle on the film's visual style. Both the director and cinematographer live in New York City, so the two spent a week together

hashing out ideas at a café near Alberti's home.

"A lot of the film isn't based in any reality as we know it," Alberti points out. "There are scenes in most movies where characters go to the supermarket, or they go home and have dinner, and right away you can see how it should look in your mind. In *Velvet Goldmine*, we have [imaginary] places like the 'Grand Ballroom' or the 'Posh Hotel' — it takes a little more work to visualize those scenes and communicate them to a crew. I tried to pick Todd's brains as much as I could; he has intelligence, a great imagination and is a great filmmaker."

To establish a set of visual references, Haynes and Alberti looked at specific films from the early Seventies, as well as some rather early, crudely made music video spots for glam-rock acts, and hundreds of still photographs and album covers by such definitive photographers of the era as Mick Rock. Haynes explains, "Like a lot of directors, I compile a lot of imagery not only as a whole panorama of references to guide myself, but also as a way to talk specifics with the other artistic people I bring onto the project. For this film, I compiled three mammoth books chock-full of clippings and photos. Maryse and I



spent a lot of time looking not only at the way these artists were depicted in terms of costumes, makeup and hair, but also how they were photographed in terms of lighting and lenses. That was really the kickoff point for looking at a lot of films from the period that were inspiring to me while I was writing the script. It was also helpful to Maryse, since she could study the very different camera vernacular that existed in the early Seventies. Nicolas Roeg's *Performance* was probably the single most influential film for me. It still feels fresh and inventive today, which says so much about what was being done in film at that time."

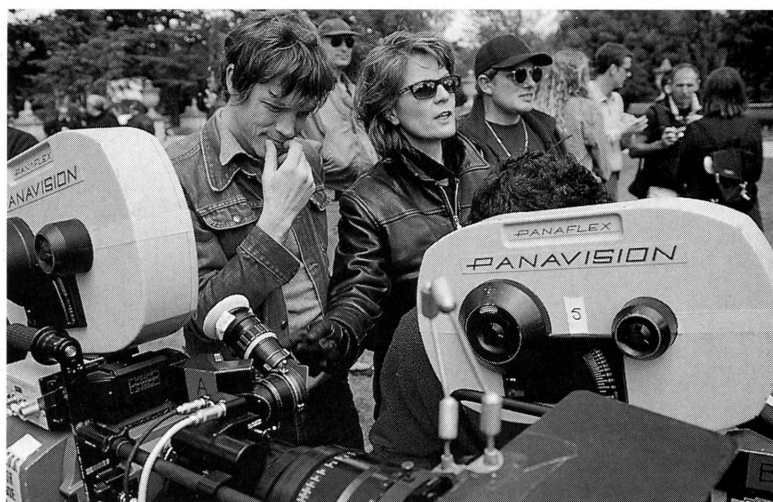
Particularly inspiring to Haynes was the jarring use of zoom lenses in *Performance* and other films of the period, a technique now generally considered to be dated and passé. "Today, you have the constant movement in and penetration of the camera into physical space, with swooping tracks and pyrotechnics of all kinds," he describes. "The camera of the late Sixties and early Seventies seemed to really hold back — it didn't physically enter space, it would instead *zoom*, pan, or swish through space. It would rack-focus suddenly, identifying one part of the frame to the other. The difference is that you really got a sense of surface, this beautiful, almost caressing of the surface of the screen. In *Performance* or early Robert Altman films, like *McCabe and Mrs. Miller*, the camera searches for and finds the subject in a fog of blurry haze and grain, then finds focus on one thing and follows it somewhere else. It's a more voyeuristic way of seeing, because you're not physically entering the space — you're staying outside and using the technology to scan the surface and isolate certain parts of the screen."

By using zooms extensively to create a more voyeuristic visual style (the cinematographer relied heavily on Panavision's 4:1 17.5-75 Primo

and 25-250mm lenses on a Panaflex Gold camera throughout the shoot), Haynes and Alberti aimed to as much as possible make the film look as if it had actually been made in the 1970s, with the narrative framing sequences set in the 1980s presented as a projection of the future. The director states, "We really tried to use a lot of the [filmic] language of the Seventies, whether it be the camera style, or the use of dissolves and voice-over — things that have gone out of fashion. I really wanted to bring those techniques back with a vengeance in how we told the story visually. I put the script together in

the Eighties as a very dry time creatively and sexually," she explains. "He decided to push that thought further, eventually portraying the Eighties as an almost fascist state. I therefore decided to go with very cool, greenish-blue, monochromatic colors in those scenes. The Eighties scenes are quite stark — the costumes and the lighting have almost no color."

By contrast, the film's many Seventies concert scenes are flamboyant in their expressive, deeply saturated colors. "I now fancy myself an expert in the Lee book of filters!" Alberti exclaims with a chuckle.



the same way that glam rock was put together, as this great collage of sources. Glam rock drew from a lot of references — old-fashioned ideas of Hollywood glamour mixed in with futuristic notions of the space age. Musicians of the glam era kept projecting these notions of a doomed future — that it was all going to end and we'd be living in an Orwellian [dystopia]. They really thought that everything was going to come crashing down, and to a large degree they were right! There was a big repressive aftermath to the drugs and youth culture of the Seventies."

Given this strategy, Alberti was careful to clearly delineate the atmospheres of scenes set in the film's two different eras. "Todd wanted to show

"This was the first movie I've done where I used so many colored gels. We started using them very early in the film, during a prologue in which a little boy in England finds an Oscar Wilde pin and takes it back to his bedroom. I used Lee's 119 Dark Blue gel for the scene, and I tried to use that color throughout the film as a metaphor for the passing of the creative torch."

Since Alberti had never photographed a rock concert before, she did some basic research before the *Velvet Goldmine* production began. "I looked at some footage of Seventies concerts and found that they were all quite simple in terms of the lighting effects and camera moves," Alberti recalls. "I consulted

"Hmm, who played lead guitar on *Ziggy Stardust*?" In the midst of the shoot, Haynes ponders pop history while Alberti does a credible impression of Velvet Underground drummer Moe Tucker. Says Haynes, "I like Maryse's style as a person, so our working relationship has a great deal to do with the fact that we communicate very well."

Glitter Gulch

"You wouldn't want me trousers to fall down, now would you?" Curt Wild (Ewan McGregor) confronts the crowd just prior to losing the leathers and "getting his ya ya's out." Alberti, who had never photographed a rock concert before the *Velvet Goldmine* shoot, prepared for the show by studying footage of Seventies concerts and consulting with lighting designer Suzanne Sasic.



with a lighting designer named Suzanne Sasic, who's worked with Nirvana and Beck. I went to a Beck concert at the Roseland club in New York City, and I really liked what she did with colors.

"I tried to approach the concerts [in the film] not only as concerts, but as dramatic scenes, each moving the story along in a narrative or dramatic way. For instance, there's a scene in which [Slade's onstage alter ego] Maxwell Demon goes over and starts playing Curt Wild's guitar with his teeth. That's a really sexy scene, so I used colors that I find sensual. I started the concert with very acidic gels — greens, yellows, and edges of reds — and as Brian started his cat-like move toward Curt, I followed him with a Lee 118 deep purple. He then enters a pool of Lee 106 bright orange and starts to play Curt's guitar with his teeth. At the 'Death of Glitter' concert, which symbolizes the end of an era, I used very pale-green and pale-blue colors, with edges of lavender. Why these colors? They just felt right. I once went to see a talk by

Vittorio Storaro [ASC, AIC] where a group of young-by-experience cinematographers were all trying to ask him, 'Which gel, which filter?' And Vittorio just started talking about the moon, the sun, the conscious and the unconscious! The message I got from that was to learn your technique but don't let it be the driving force. Instead, trust your intuition and instincts."

Many of the *Velvet Goldmine* concert scenes were shot at London's venerable and spacious Brixton Academy, the site of countless rock shows over the years. "When I first saw it, it was a bit intimidating because it's a big space!" Alberti exclaims. "For stage lighting I used standard rock 'n' roll concert rigging — truss, grid, and lighting trees and a computer board. Each song had its own color scheme and I played the board almost like a musical instrument. For the Seventies concert scenes, I used traditional lights like Par cans, augmented with a couple of 5Ks, because some of the gels I was using — like the purple Lee 180 —

are very saturated and have very low light transmission."

Alberti opted to use Kodak's EXR 5298 for most of the film. "Vision 500T [5279] had just become available at the time, but I felt 98 had a look that was closer to the stocks used in the Seventies," she explains. "I used 93 quite a bit as well for exteriors and some newsreel scenes, which I shot with my Aaton camera in regular 16mm and later blew up to 35mm."

In keeping with Haynes's desire to contrast his view of the vibrancy of the Seventies with the blandness of the subsequent decade, Alberti approached the Eighties concert scenes in a much more sober style. "For the Tommy Stone concert in the Eighties, I used a couple of CyberLights, which give you thin rays of light that can cross and caress and sweep across the stage and audience. Those lights really came along in the Eighties. Todd stressed that the Tommy Stone musical figure had to be much more corporate and cold — he has lost his passion, sensuality and

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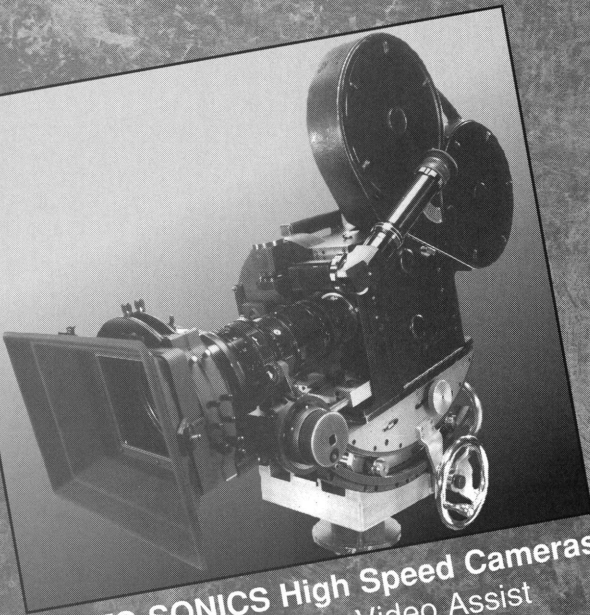


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Glitter Gulch

An impish Slade cavorts within the baroque setting of an experimental music video. The filmmakers emulated the style of early promotional clips with wit and panache.

creativity. I therefore used those very electronic tools and cool colors.”

Alberti extended this approach even to contrasting scenes depicting the two eras’ musical heroes in their respective dressing rooms before they hit the stage. “The first time we see Brian Slade, he’s at the mirror in his dressing room before the ‘Death

180 gel to give the room a heavy feeling. Slade is about to ‘kill’ the Maxwell Demon character onstage, and he’s at the end of his rope. I wanted to keep the room dark, moody and sensual, with no fill light — I was a bit nervous about that idea, but I just went with it. Slade is lit by the small practical lights around

scenes in the wings of the rock ‘n’ roll theater, on the backlight, with smoke acting as a fill light.

“By contrast, for a scene in which Tommy Stone is in *his* dressing room, I just bounced a light into the ceiling. It’s all very white and flat.”

Alberti was also asked to simulate the charmingly artless look of early music promotional clips, which can be seen as the prototypes of the modern music video. In these clips, a performer or band would often be photographed against a simple, stark white backdrop. “I lit those scenes with space lights straight from the top, as well as a couple of nine-lights coming through spaced double layers of ¼ silk diffusion,” she explains. “I used double layers so that the light was really diffused. I also used a little edge light from the side, so that the scene wouldn’t be completely flat. But the idea is that the room is a white cocoon.”

Most challenging for Alberti were fanciful or outlandish scenes in which she didn’t have any sort of existing reference to motivate her cinematography. In one such scene, Slade and his fellow musical pranksters dress up in the foppish wigs and pantaloons of 18th-century British aristocrats as they regale journalists during a surreal interview session at the “Posh Hotel.”

“I first looked at a lot of [production designer] Christopher Hobbs’s drawings, and he had also built small models of the set,” Alberti recalls. “I ended up using space lights for the set of the men in black suits who are arranged in a circle around Slade. Otherwise, I used a range of lights as small as Dedos to give a little accent to the sculptures in the background, as well as two 2Ks and a couple of 5Ks. The light in the scene was basically white, with ½ CTO on a couple of the lamps to warm up the scene.”

Haynes admits mischievously, “I’d love to take credit for that scene, but I can’t. It’s like what Bowie said



of Glitter’ concert,” she notes. “The room is painted a purplish red. I wanted to make a narrow pool of light in the background, so instead of dealing with a soft light and flagging it down, I used the narrow beam of a Par can with just a little diffusion to open it up a touch, and a purple Lee

the mirror, which give off white light. But I added a tweenie on him with a Plus Green correction gel, which is normally used to correct a lamp to match it with fluorescent light. I used that gel quite a bit throughout the film as a color gel; it’s a very nice green. I also used it a lot during

on the edge of the millennium



some things are still made by hand

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Glitter Gulch



"You could be my main man..." Slade has his eye on Curt Wild, whose outrageous onstage antics make our hero's heart skip a beat.

in the early Seventies: he was a human Xerox machine, constantly storing references. I tried to replicate that [philosophy] in this film. That scene in particular is a reference to Bowie's management company, Main Man, which once flew a handful of journalists from America to London to witness a Ziggy Stardust show. They put the journalists up at the Dorchester Hotel and wined and dined them. One afternoon, Bowie, his wife, Angie, Iggy Pop and Lou Reed basically put on a show for these journalists. Bowie changed his clothes four times, and they drank champagne and ate strawberries. It was this decadent display: 'Let's put on a show, let's make the journalists really believe we are these people!' I really didn't have to take the scene that far from what really happened."

In another highly symbolic sequence, Slade descends a winding staircase as he performs a song in the decadent "Grand Ballroom," a metaphorical backdrop suggesting

the singer's (and the glam era's) impending fall from grace. To plan for the sequence, Alberti and Haynes first blocked the action out on a scale-model set. "Todd and I had a small video camera, and we made a little 'man' out of cardboard," Alberti describes. "Todd would hold the little man and walk him down the staircase of the miniature, and I would tape him with a Hi-8 camera so that we could find the right timing and camera moves. I asked Todd, 'What is the Grand Ballroom?' And he told me that it represented decay and the end of an era. The scene [depicts] a last little creative burst or spark. My idea was to light the decaying ballroom as if it had just burned down, so I lit most of the scene from underneath. The set, which was on a soundstage, was basically two huge, flat panels that were painted quite beautifully in perspective. I used a lot of 1Ks and tweenies coming up through the cracks of the staircase, so Slade would be crossing through all of these little 'flames.' I had a couple of 5Ks in the rear. Todd wanted to change the color of some part of the set at the bottom of the staircase, so I used a couple of green gels there to offset the red paint. Slade eventually jumps onto a chandelier rising up from darkness. The chandelier is lit with strings of Christmas lights, and I hid little Dedo lights in there so that once again Slade would be lit from below."

In a flashback scene set on New Year's Eve, 1969, Slade meets his future wife, Mandy, for the first time. Alberti employed a four-point star filter — another common visual tool of the era — to lend the scene a diffused, vaguely psychedelic feel. "The star filter was very much an aspect of the glam-rock look," she points out. "I asked Todd if that scene would be a good place in the movie to use it. Like the zooms, the star filter was used so much in the Seventies that the technique eventually became

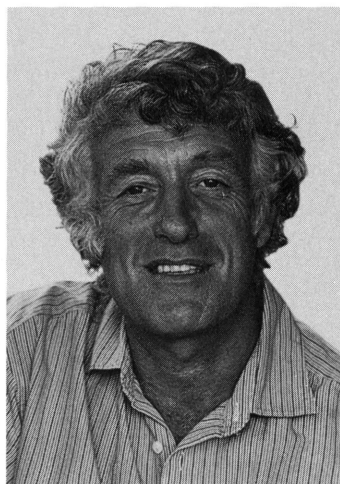
tacky. But it was liberating to say, 'Yeah, zooms are great if they're used well!' And so is the star filter. It took every reflection of light — from Mylar-type curtains in the background to someone's earring to a reflection on someone's hair — and broke it up into a four-point 'star.' For that scene, I used a lot of 2Ks in a half-circle with just 1/8 CTO on the lamps. When Slade moves toward Mandy, and the romance starts, I tried to create the feeling of time stopping and people stopping around them. We faded down the 2K white light and cross-faded up some 5Ks with the dark-blue Lee 119 gel on them. Once again, those gels are very thick and the 5Ks allowed me to get an exposure."

A surprisingly simple use of gels and mirrors propels a later, very impressionistic scene in which new creative partners Slade and Wild ride





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“Here’s the way I like to work,” says Roger Deakins: “Prime lenses, close to wide open, no diffusion, no flare. For all that, the new Cookes are the best I’ve worked with”

they were. Looking at the printer lights, I could see I wasn’t getting as much exposure. When you’re taking a filmstock to its limit, that makes a difference.”

“I’ve seen the bare lightbulb test footage; and I made some comparison dusk street-scene shots myself, when the first Cookes were delivered. *Fantastic*. No double kick from car headlights, even wide open. And in terms of clarity and sharpness, the Cookes were the best I’d seen.”

“On the film I’m shooting now, we made a sunset shot with a very hot sun in the frame. I used the Cooke 32mm with nothing in front of the lens; and I knew it would be clean. That’s what these lenses

do for me: *they let me take a few more risks*. I feel more confident about putting a hot light or the sun in frame and still getting shadow detail and little or no flare.”

“There’s only one thing I don’t like: not enough focal lengths! They tell me they’re coming out with more — I wish they’d hurry up.”

Some Roger Deakins credits and awards:

A Director of Photography since 1983, his film credits include FARGO and KUNDUN, for both of which he won Academy Award Nominations; and SHAWSHANK REDEMPTION, for which he won both an Academy Award Nomination and an ASC Award.

“There’s a lot of mystification about cameras and lenses,” says Roger Deakins. “People prefer one major camera or another, but they’re *all* good; and so are all three major lens systems.”

“Stopped down to T5.6 or further, very few people looking at the screen can tell which make of lens was used, on most shots. But I like to shoot lit interiors between T2.5 and T3.2. At those apertures and wider, I’ve been able to see some differences.”

“A while back, I went straight from shooting a film with one set of lenses to shooting another with a different make. I noticed that the other lenses weren’t really as fast, wide open, as their markings *said*

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Glitter Gulch

Aloof in his foppish finery, Slade endures the attentions of a music video crew — here under the watchful eye of his wife, Mandy (Toni Collette, lower right). “I lit those scenes with space lights straight from the top, as well as a couple of nine-lights coming through spaced double layers of 1/4 silk diffusion,” Alberti reveals. “I used double layers so that the light was really diffused. I also used a little edge light from the side, so that the scene wouldn’t be completely flat. But the idea is that the room is a white cocoon.”



together in a merry-go-round car as a hallucinatory mix of lights and spaceships swirl behind them in the night sky. “Christopher Hobbs built this little car that you normally see in fairground attractions,” Alberti details. “We had two people simply pushing the car back and forth with the actors inside. I had four 2K lights altogether, two on either side of the car, all fitted with different gels. Four different electricians moved the lights across the actors. One had his light bounced in a mirror, and moved the mirror. Another had a light with a piece of Mylar, which I had him shake and move. I just told

my guys to have fun with it, to ‘dance’ with their lights at different rhythms. Then behind the actors, we rear-projected some footage that the camera operator, Joe Arcidiacono, had shot on a fairground ride with my Aaton 16mm camera. It was very, very low-tech scene, but there is a beauty to the old techniques. The few visual effects shots in the film were done by Peerless Films, a great optical house in London.”

Haynes consciously chose to use old-school effects techniques throughout the film to mirror the organic creativity of glam rock. “I wanted the film to have a grittiness to

it, even if there were scenes that had to have spectacle and richness,” he explains. “It’s not like I wanted the film to look tacky; I wanted it to look rich, but I also wanted to achieve that look in simpler ways. That scene with the merry-go-round car is very effective despite the fact that it’s achieved in the crudest possible way. Similarly, the music of the time didn’t have a lot of gimmicks. When a song had strings, they used real strings, and drums were always real drums.”

The filmmakers also aimed for a gritty feel in a *Kane*-inflected scene set in the Eighties, during which Stuart finds Slade’s ex-wife wasting away her days at a drab New York bar, her best years well behind her. “We shot that scene at a bar in London,” Alberti recounts. “I made the light quite harsh from the top, and used very little fill light. It’s a harsh time in Mandy’s life, and she’s not glamorous anymore. Earlier in the movie, I lit her in a very glamorous, almost Thirties style. But now, even with no makeup, a bad hairdo and tophat, Toni Collette is still gorgeous, and so is Christian Bale. Christian had no fill light in the scene, because Todd had told me that he hates scenes in movies where everybody has a point of light in their eyes. The key light above Mandy is a Tota light that I hid in the beam of the ceiling with a little bit of diffusion. For the background I





used a couple of flagged-off 2Ks from the balcony, as well as a few Kino Flos.”

Haynes and Alberti took this carefully deglamourized style to its logical limit in the film’s penultimate scene, as Stuart finally tracks down a burnt-out Curt Wild in a New York watering hole drowning in sickening fluorescent light. Ironically, the two find themselves surrounded by young Tommy Stone worshippers. “Todd really wanted me to push that scene to the extreme,” Alberti comments. “It’s sort of a satire and caricature of the era. He wanted to get across the idea that the Eighties were no fun, with no real creativity. The key for me was to light the scene with no color or passion. I lit the room almost entirely with [ceiling-mounted] Kino Flos with Plus Green correction. In the back window there’s a red light to suggest that the scene takes place in New York City, even though we were shooting in London.”

Alberti first credits the look of the film to Haynes’s vision, then to Christopher Hobbs’s production design, Sandy Powell’s costumes, Peter King’s hair and makeup, and to the support of the film’s producer, Christine Vachon.

For Haynes, the film’s final sequence sums up the passing of a

bold, challenging era in pop culture and closes the movie on an appropriate bum note. “To me, that scene represents the dearth of radical spirit that I saw as such a tremendous aspect of the Seventies,” he comments. “It’s not meant to blame the poor kids in the bar — this is the music they were given, and it’s all they have. Everybody needs some piece of pop music to cling to and get through

their teenage years with. For this generation, it’s Tommy Stone, while for another generation it’s someone else. The onus falls more on the artists themselves. As Curt Wild says, ‘If you don’t think about what your work is doing to the world, this is what you end up with.’” ■

Slade and Wild, always the height of fashion, prepare to carry the news to all the young dudes.

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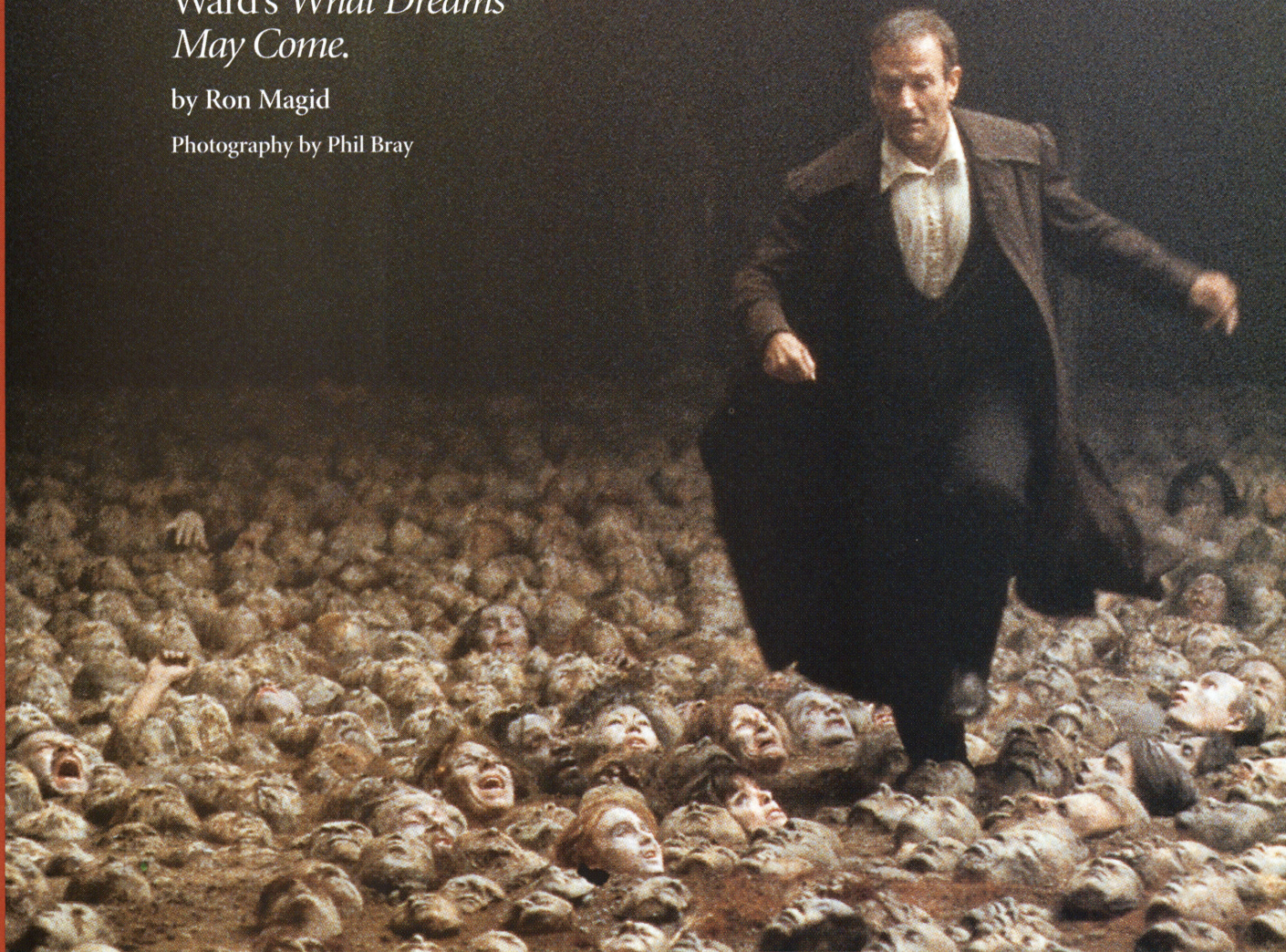
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W Dream Weavers

Cinematographer
Eduardo Serra, AFC
reveals operatic visions
of Heaven and Hell
in director Vincent
Ward's *What Dreams
May Come*.

by Ron Magid

Photography by Phil Bray



Based on the novel by famed fantasist Richard Matheson, *What Dreams May Come* is an epic journey which explores the idea that the dead actually grieve for the living, much in the vein of Italian poet Dante's thoughts on the afterlife. In this new film, New Zealand director Vincent Ward combines the quasi-medieval vision

of his first feature, *The Navigator* (1988), with the passion of his most recent picture, *Map of the Human Heart* (1992), to create a mature, haunting story of heartfelt longing. The picture is beautifully shot by Ward's fellow *Map* maker, director of photography Eduardo Serra, AFC, whose credits include *The Hairdresser's Husband*, *Funny Bones* and *Jude*. The cinematographer won last year's British Academy (BAFTA) Award for *The Wings of the Dove*, which also earned Serra an Academy Award nomination in the United States (see AC June '98).

"Eduardo is very methodical and particular about light," Ward notes. "He can create what I call 'exotic experiences,' particularly in smaller environments. He paints in tones photographically, so he'll underexpose a background element in a very measured way — by two or three stops — but he's very conscious that that element is an important part of the shot, which creates this very layered, European effect.

"He uses a scale of grays to measure each part of the frame. And even though some elements are underexposed, they're all part of the painting, so to speak. Sometimes the objects that are two stops under are actually the most important aspects of the shot. That [technique] creates a kind of unity of emphasis."

Ironically, Ward originally passed on Ron Bass's script because he felt there was no way to visualize the journeys of Chris Nielsen (Robin Williams) through Heaven and Hell in search of his family. Ward's biggest stumbling block was the fact that in the script, as in the novel, Chris's wife, Annie (Annabella Sciorra), was a caterer, a profession that the director felt wouldn't provide the ideal visual link between the couple. "It was a beautifully written and very emotional screenplay, but there was no particular clue suggesting how to envisage the 75 percent of the story which took place in the afterlife,



except for some metaphors in the dialogue about how we paint our own world," says Ward, who had studied as a painter before becoming a filmmaker. "Suddenly I thought, 'What would happen if Annie was a restorer of 19th-century fine art, and she was also painting a picture for Chris as a gift?' One of the great ideas behind this film was that rather than there being an objective afterlife that's the same for everybody, *you* create your own Paradise, and it's whatever you want it to be. We could say that Chris loved Annie so much that he based *his* Paradise on a gift from his wife, a large painting of places they've been, and he actually walked into her painting when he died. A month after I got the script, I realized that painting could be the key [to telling the story visually,] and I told Ron Bass, 'If that appeals to you, then I'd be interested.' He was very open to the idea and it proved to be a wonderful way for the characters to communicate with each other between the two disparate worlds."

Just as Chris would conceive his afterlife as a series of canvasses based on Annie's style and the 19th-century artists whose work she loved, Ward and Serra agreed on a painterly approach to the film's visuals — both in the here-and-now and beyond. "I wanted the film to evoke a sense of 19th-century painting, because at that time, most people still believed in an afterlife and the notion of

Opposite: Chris Nielsen (Robin Williams) treads lightly over the Sea of Faces, a desolate plain strewn with living human heads gazing upwards at a bleak sky. To create the scene, rubber masks were interspersed with the real faces of performers below the stage. Serra found that extremely soft illumination — with no fill and just a hint of backlight — helped to sell the surreal scene. **Above:** Albert (Cuba Gooding Jr.) guides Chris through the impressionistic Painted World.



Photos courtesy of Polygram Filmed Entertainment.

Dream Weavers

Right: The "stairway to heaven" of Marie's World, built at the Treasure Island Naval Base. "I wasn't able to have much space above or around [our sets]," Serra admits. "I often used many space lights for the general fill, and from behind the set I had cherry pickers and elevating platforms reaching the top of the set and the ceiling for my strong key lights." Below: A shot from the final sequence, featuring extensive visual effects work by Pacific Ocean Post. (See p. 53 as well.)



Paradise, so that was what we mainly referred to," says Ward.

While the director characterizes Serra as methodical and particular, the French cameraman found Ward's perfectionism to be both demanding and contradictory. "Vincent is only interested in what has not been done before, which is basically the same for me," Serra notes. "He's always invited me to invent things and to use a very wide span of whatever can be done with a camera, so he is very open to all kinds of technical solutions. What makes his richness as an artist is his way of thinking, which is not a scholarly A plus B meets C. Vincent's creative process can be very confusing for people around him; he will say very strange things and make great demands that sometimes contradict themselves. But that's his way of creating and building up decisions.

"Our experience on *Map of the Human Heart* was very surprising. On that film, some people were quite panicked, coming to me and saying, 'You have to stop him! It's not the way things should be done!' and I'd

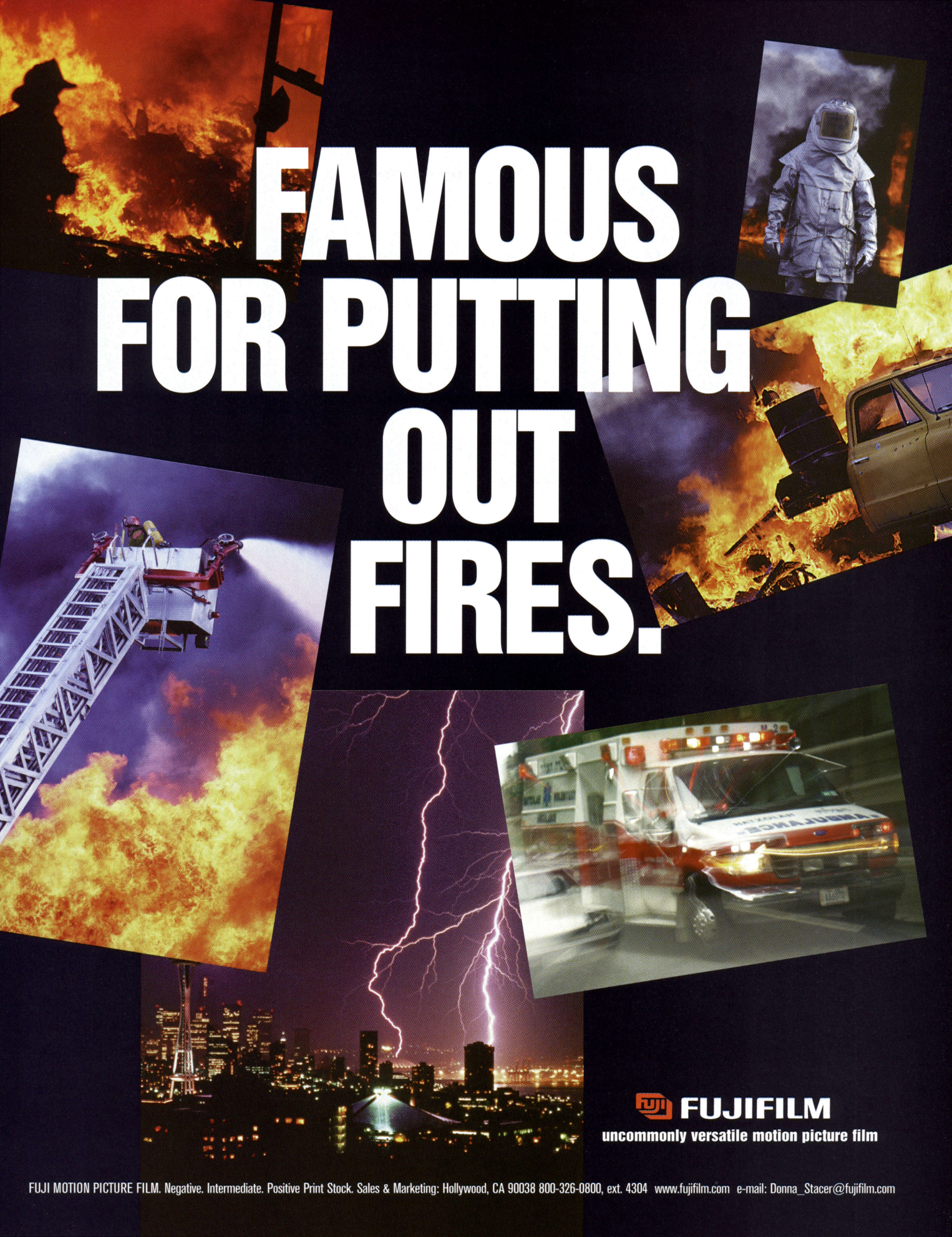
say, 'No! You have to let him go!' After that, I knew what I could expect with Vincent and how I should be prepared. Eighteen months ago, people said, 'Oh, this film doesn't make sense!' But it now appears quite easy to understand. When we let Vincent's ideas overflow, then we get something wonderful that we would not get otherwise."

In fact, Ward's organized chaos is a marked strength of *What Dreams May Come*, particularly in that its riotous imagery encouraged Serra to explore multiple emulsions. "I am a great believer in having a choice of different stocks. Most of the time, I

tend to use Fuji because it's most appropriate for the kinds of films I have done, but on a film like this it's good to take advantage of different stocks. The basic idea was to use the Fuji — which has a certain glamour to it, especially on women — for scenes set in Paradise and for the happier flashback scenes, where I also pulled the stock one stop to make the scenes softer, and then use Kodak stocks for drama and effects. I used Fuji F-500 [Super F-Series 8571] on sections that wouldn't involve any special effects — like the first scene of the film, in which Annie and Chris meet while sailing. Then I used



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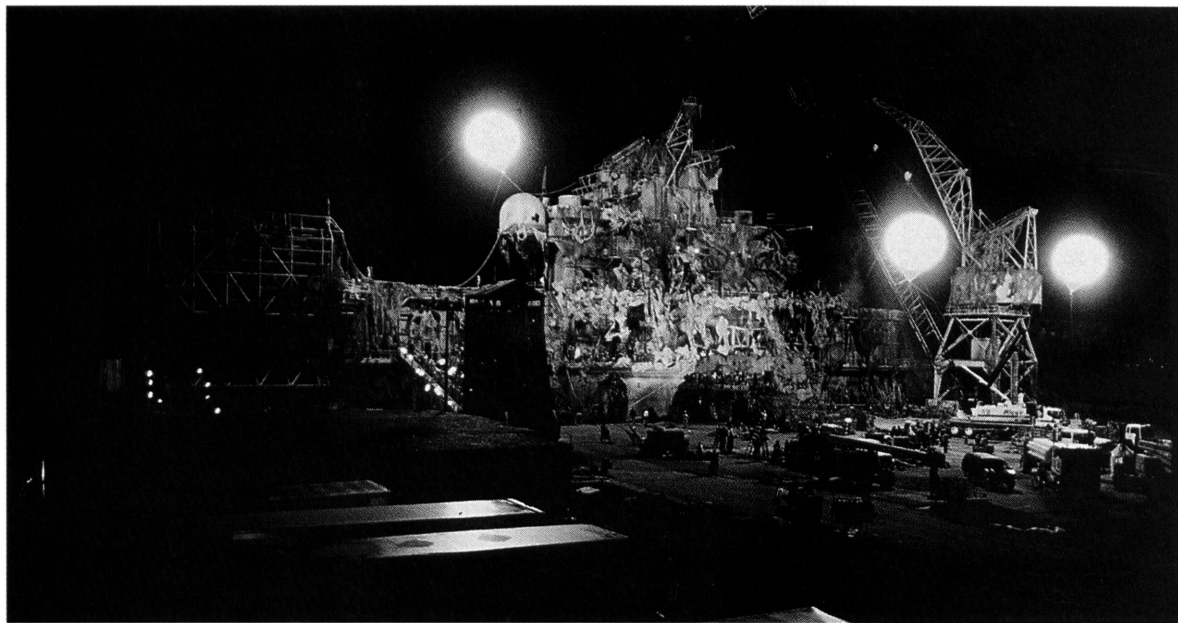


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Dream Weavers

Production designer Eugenio Zanetti transformed a decommissioned aircraft carrier into a portion of the *Shores of Hell*. To illuminate the enormous carrier — a nighttime setup in a San Francisco shipyard — Serra deployed five 15' helium balloons fitted with four 4K HMI lamps. The cameraman expounds, "The balloons were controllable, very easy to use, and very useful for creating a relatively soft top light in a big area. I also used fire and flares as practical sources, though not close enough to the actors to make it dangerous."



Kodak EXR 5298, which has a more bold and hard look, when going through Hell and for all of the darker effects scenes. Finally, I used Vision 200T 5277 in areas area that were happy and more comedic. Those were situations where I normally would have used Fuji, but the scenes involved special effects."

Serra shot *Dreams* with Panavision Platinum and Gold II cameras outfitted with Primo prime and zoom lenses. Additionally, the cinematographer elected to use the Super 35 format to achieve a 2.35:1 frame, as he had on his previous collaboration with Ward. "On *Map of the Human Heart*, I thought we couldn't go with the anamorphic because our choice of lenses would be very limited," the cinematographer recalls. "And I knew Vincent would want to use all of the lenses that you can imagine, from the widest to the longest — which we couldn't use if we were stuck with anamorphic. Also, the effects artists on *Dreams* could have worked with anamorphic, but they are happier with a flat format, so I opted for Super 35."

In the film's first 10 minutes, the cinematographer made use of what he terms "more traditional lighting and composition" to detail

Chris and Annie's first meeting, their romance in Italy, marriage, and even the death of their two children in a tragic car crash. "I used normal filtration, sometimes on the bluish side, and corals for happy, amorous scenes and flashbacks," Serra details. "The approach was to build the images so that they followed the dramatic structure of the film, which meant trying to find different types of lighting, color, and technical solutions."

He employed a similar photographic approach for Chris's entry into Paradise, or "the Painted World" — a CG landscape of lush Monet-style flowers and swirling Van Gogh skies literally dripping with running pigment. Since the Painted World is based on Annie's artistic depiction of their Italian rendezvous, Ward and Serra opted to shoot both sequences in the same location — Glacier National Park in Montana — to subtly underscore the parallel themes.

While shooting within the Painted World, Serra decided to create pronounced yet soft backlight effects in every shot, with disregard for motivation or source continuity. This approach, which adds a subliminal impressionistic effect, was facilitated by the fact that every shot was to be heavily processed in postpro-

duction, allowing Serra to simply have in-frame backlight fixtures erased.

Serra filmed the sequences with Annie and Chris in a relatively straightforward manner, but Ward insisted that the camera have free reign when depicting the remarkable Painted World, even though every frame of Serra's original footage was



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to be digitally doctored. "Many effects films use a static camera with nodal-point tilts while shooting actors against a bluescreen," Ward offers, "and the actors feel completely constrained. If I wanted to shoot handheld, we shot handheld, and then added all of the effects later on."

Consequently, Serra found himself working with targets and markers while on location, which would allow the effects artists to recreate his camera moves in 3-D space via motion-tracking techniques. Yet despite the fact that a heavy layer of computer animation would later ebb and flow over his images to create the Painted World, Serra's compositions and lighting would still form the basis of the land's depiction. (See visual effects story, page 52.)

The duo's strategy does beg an obvious question: why go to the trouble of shooting on location in Montana if the footage would be so drastically altered in post? Despite the extensive plans for the Painted World's look, at the start of physical production it had not yet been determined how the "paint" effects would be created, nor to what extent they would be used, so beginning the postproduction work with dramatic landscapes instead of bare bluescreen backgrounds seemed to be a prudent plan.

An interesting parallel setting was created using Chris and Annie's home. Open, sunlit, and inviting, the space is transformed into a bleak wreck in purgatory, where Annie will spend eternity after committing suicide — unless she is redeemed by Chris's love. Serra vividly contrasts life and death through the respective use of a beautiful warm aura and hideous cold blue tones.

The home's interior was built entirely on stage, but Serra added a sense of realism to the set by following a specific rule: "When in the studio, I shoot as I would on a practical location. I don't like to have catwalks or light from above — most

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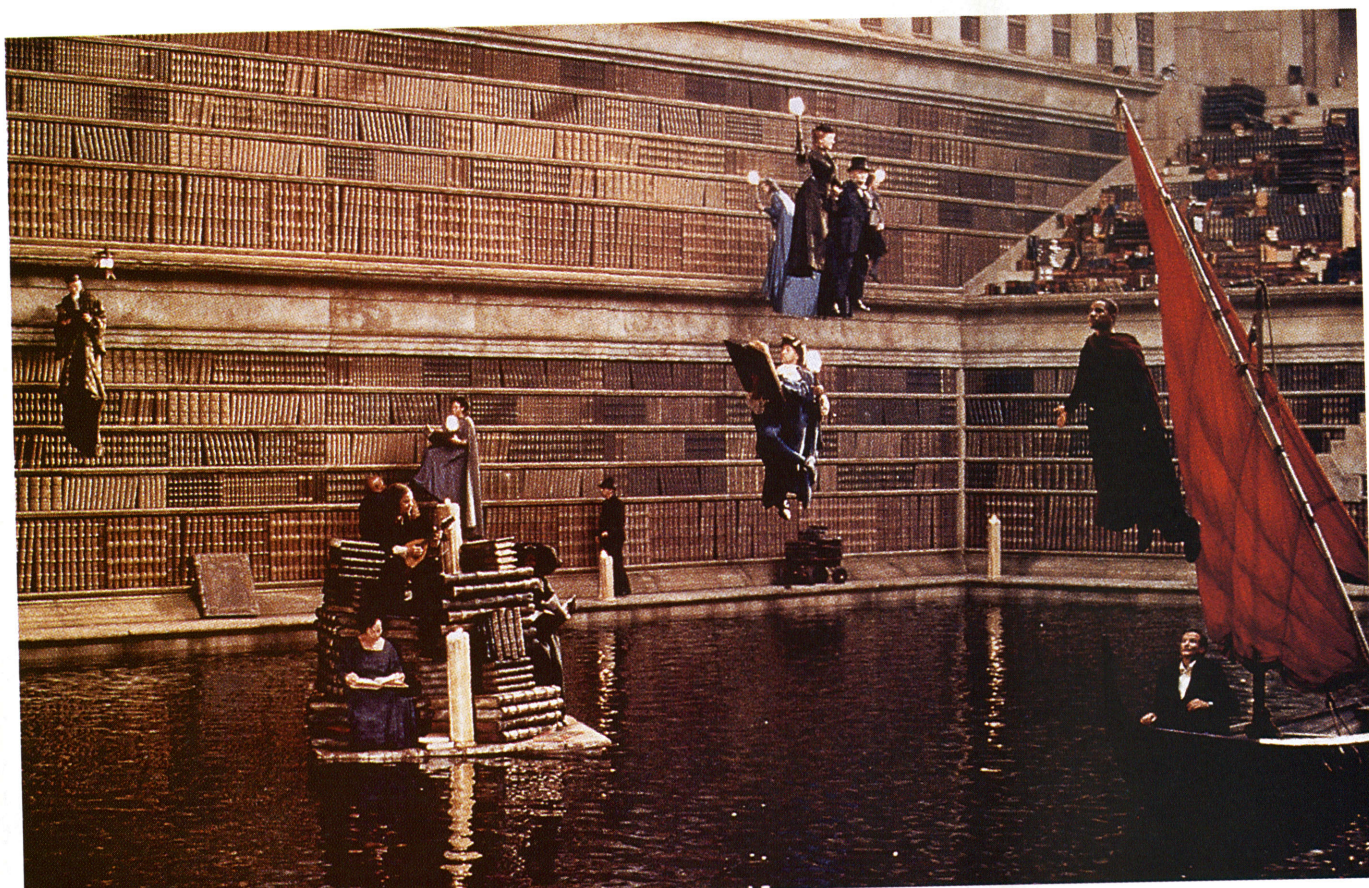
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• Dean Cundey, ASC describes how he created the San Francisco bay on a soundstage..

Dream Weavers



"The library [set] was based on the work of the visionary 19th-century architect Boulleé," Ward recalls. "I brought Boulleé [into the discussion], and Eugenio decided to use his material. The water was an idea I had because I was very keen on keeping the sense of the quest, and also because water automatically makes a set look less like a set."

of the time I have ceilings and I use windows for key lighting. To make the light coming through the windows look real while shooting daylight scenes, it's a matter of light balance and correctly choosing which windows the light should be coming through. I used some Dinos and diffusion, and tried to keep the light coming in primarily from one side, without any cross lighting from elsewhere."

The devastated Hell-bound incarnation of the house was constructed on a gimbal so it could be tilted at cockeyed angles to emphasize the unbalanced emotions of Annie's existence. Needless to say, this made Serra's own situation a living hell, requiring his crew to construct inclined platforms to counteract the angle of the floor and give them level space for dolly work. "At one end, however, the platform would be very tall," Serra explains, "so we would have to boom down or

up to keep the shots level depending on which way we were dolly. We also had a Steadicam, but it was very

"I do want modeling and contrast in the image, so my main goal is always to reconcile these two things that people might think are contradictory: softlight and contrast. That's my obsession."

— Eduardo Serra, AFC

difficult to control because of the tilted stage. The operator also had a good risk of falling because there were all of these broken objects on the floor."

Due to the slanted stage surface, Serra primarily set his lights on stands off the gimbaled platform.

"We had a lot of freedom in that sequence because it was not a strictly realistic situation," he says. "We used strong shafts of hard light, which we would never have used during the rest of the film. At first, I fought against using our beams of light through smoke, because they become too 'glamorous,' but [in this case] it made for a completely different universe." The jumbled, unsteady flooring kept operators Anastas Michos and Kim Marks on their toes, while the hard-light approach conspired to make properly illuminating the actors a difficult proposition. Serra and gaffer Jack English therefore relied upon easily maneuverable, lightweight Kino Flo banks or simple bounce cards to provide fill on the players' faces.

While the wrecked house is the endpoint of Chris's journey into the underworld, the highway to Hell is a land littered with the refuse of lost souls, as realized by Ward, Serra and

production designer Eugenio Zanetti (*Flatliners*, *Restoration*). "I had a very specific range of images that I associated with Hell," Ward says. "We changed the screenplay so that it had these scenes which gave it the feel of heroic myth. The final sequence takes place in the upside-down cathedral surrounding the remnants of Chris and Annie's house, which was originally designed by Mike Worrall for *Alien*³, but never used because I didn't finish that film. [Ward departed *Alien*³ just prior to shooting and was replaced by David Fincher.] Our depiction of Hell is a bit in the vein of [19th-century French artist] Gustav Doré, because I wanted to make it feel more like an ancient fable rather than purely a psychological journey — though that was a feeling I also wanted."

Chris's quest to find his wife begins in a dreamlike version of Venice brimming with books, and an amazing library with canals for aisles. There, he and his guide, Albert (Cuba Gooding Jr.), meet up with the mysterious Tracker (Max von Sydow), who agrees to help them find Annie in this netherworld. "The library was based on the work of the visionary 19th-century architect Boullée," Ward recalls. "I brought Boullée [into the discussion], and Eugenio decided to use his material. The water was an idea I had because I was very keen on keeping the sense of the quest, and also because water automatically makes a set look less like a set."

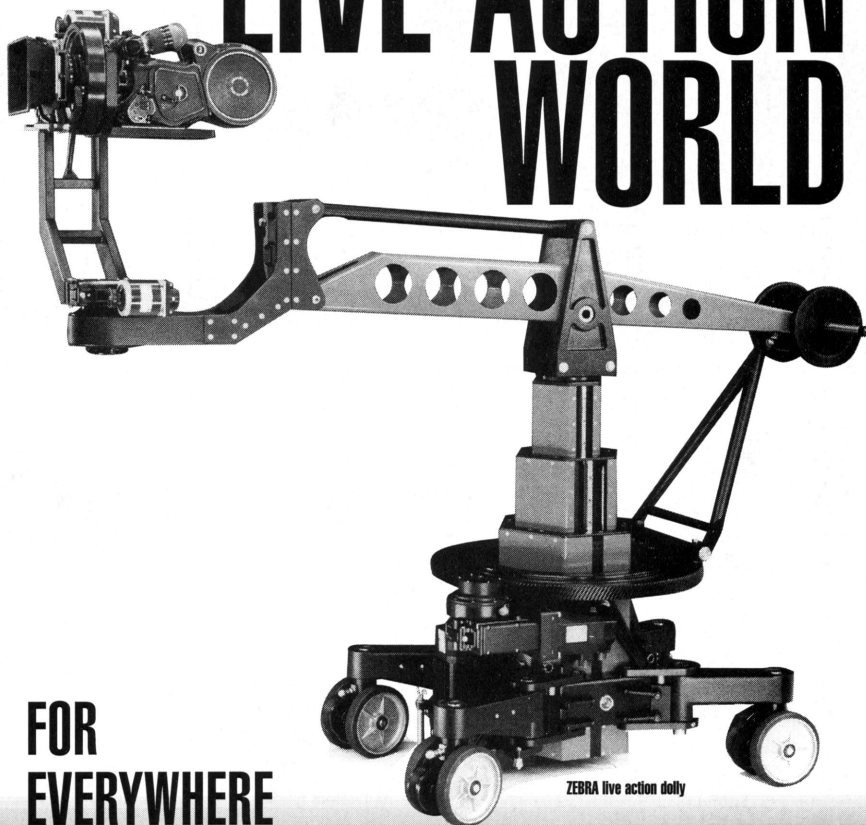
The massive library set was constructed on one side of an indoor water tank found at the decommissioned Treasure Island Naval Base in the San Francisco Bay; on the opposite bank lay Chris's cottage in the Painted World. Later, the library set was struck and replaced by a golden "stairway to heaven" setpiece. Despite their differences, each of these sets presented the same problem: as large as the Treasure Island facility was, it could not accommo-

date all of the imposing environments. "They were difficult sets because I wasn't able to have much space above or around them," Serra admits. "I often used many space lights for the general fill, and from behind the set I had cherry pickers and elevating platforms reaching the top of the set and the ceiling for my strong key lights."

Much of the library set's scale

was fabricated via CG — particularly the entry of Chris's sailboat into the library, where the camera does a magnificent crane move up to reveal the impressive interior, then turns completely around to follow our heroes through the archive. "Two-thirds of that shot was done on the computer," Serra marvels. "We had drawings plus computer printouts that showed the actual set combined

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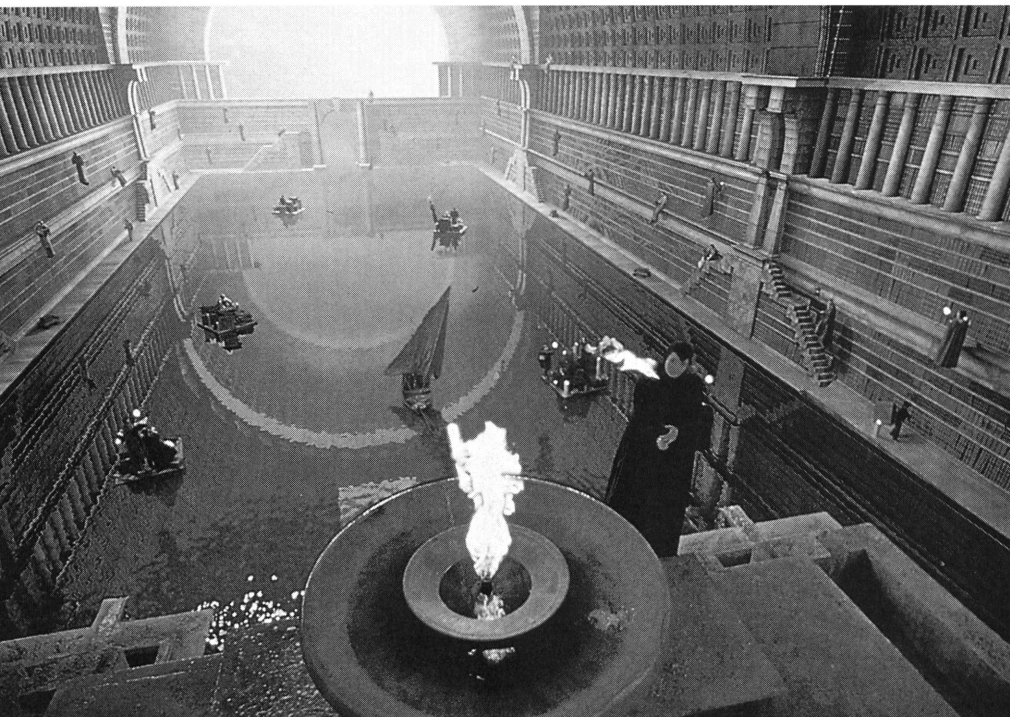
with the CG. We shot normally when the boat was against the actual set, but sometimes the reverses were shot against huge greenscreens placed in the set.”

The sequence also demanded

to avoid any blue backlight or rimlight, which again would be, for me, too glamorous for the journey to Hell. Hell was an area in a kind of a permanent twilight — not day, not night. I tried to give it consistency by

the twisted, battered hulks of old vessels. “I did a rough drawing of the ship graveyard, some of which I knew would be constructed as models, but what could I do when we got close to them?” Ward recalls. “If we built a set, it could only be so large. Fortunately, Eugenio found an abandoned aircraft carrier that was going to be chopped up for scrap metal, and came up with the really fantastic idea of redressing it so that we had this enormous real-life location.” To illuminate the enormous carrier — a nighttime setup in a San Francisco shipyard — Serra deployed five 15’ helium balloons fitted with four 4K HMI lamps. The cinematographer expounds, “The balloons were controllable, very easy to use, and very useful for creating a relatively soft top light in a big area. I also used fire and flares as practical sources, though not close enough to the actors to make it dangerous. Still, shooting there *was* dangerous because the ship was in such poor condition. For safety reasons, the areas we could use were quite limited.”

After Chris, Albert and the Tracker rise up in an elevator alongside the derelict ship, they push past hordes of damned souls and reach the Sea of Faces, a desolate plain strewn with living human heads gazing upwards at a bleak sky. “The



Above: Another perspective on the library set, as seen in the finished film with CG extensions. **Right:** Chris and Albert meet with Tracker, (Max von Sydow), who leads them through the afterlife.

extensive wirework (later erased), which enabled Chris and Albert to practically glide to the top of the stacks, where they find the dour Tracker hovering amidst the uppermost shelves. After the characters reached their destination, the actors were placed on a small crane platform, which bobbed up and down to lend a floating feeling.

When the three adventurers take the sailboat out into the open sea, they traverse a canal formed of bookshelves rising to infinity, an effect achieved by cleverly reconfiguring the setpieces, then placing a greenscreen at the end, where the open sea was added digitally. After the trio is attacked by swarming Hellions — a scene actually shot in a swimming pool elsewhere — they land on the grim shores of Hell, which Serra illustrated with minimalist colors. “I was always trying

always having some top light, but my key preoccupation was always to make Hell as monochromatic as possible.”

The initial dilemma for Ward and Serra was how to film the shores of Hell, a vast landscape dotted with



problem was how to create that image in a way that would allow an actor to walk across the faces without stepping on someone's head," Ward says. "Eugenio was incredibly ingenious. He designed an elevated set so we could fit people under the stage. Three out of every four heads were to be made of rubber. We cut a hole where the fourth head would be and put an actual person's face in there. Then, by using their hands, each person would manipulate the two malleable rubber masks on either side of them, so three out of the four faces would be moving. Robin Williams, Cuba Gooding and Max von Sydow could just walk over the rubber faces [as if they were stepping stones]. That allowed them to easily cross the set, which I thought was quite brilliant."

The tremendous economy and imagination of the Sea of Faces' Gustave Doré-inspired production design was well-matched by Serra's stark, impressionistic lighting. "However, it was quite difficult because the set was a little too small, and I felt we needed it to go on forever," Serra declares. "I used a giant drop silk — a reflective material — and I was bouncing [light] on it so that I would have a very huge gray sky above them — very soft and slightly backlit, with no fill light."

Quite paradoxically, Serra's exploitation of soft sources in *Dreams* lent a very hard, shadowy look. "I've been working on that for 20 years," he says. "I do want modeling and contrast in the image, so my main goal is always to reconcile these two things that people might think are contradictory: softlight and contrast. That's my obsession." ■

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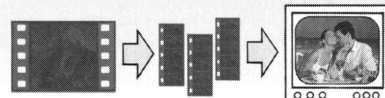


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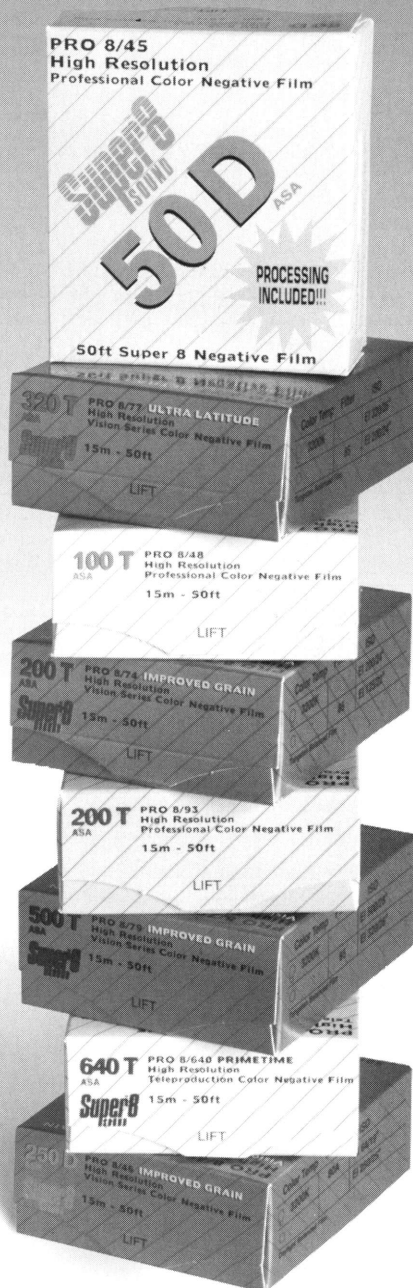
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Designing the Afterlife



Bringing director Vincent Ward's inspired vision of the afterlife to the screen for *What Dreams May Come* demanded the utmost from a cadre of visual effects houses, including Mass.Illusions (subsequently rechristened Manex Visual Effects), Pacific Ocean Post (POP), Digital Domain, Illusion Arts, CIS and Cinema Production Services, Inc. However, in attempting to portray metaphysical ideas as broad and undefined as Heaven and Hell, Ward and his equally ambitious effects crew were probably doomed to hit some bumps on their path to nirvana. Ward had

previously suffered while trying to personally tackle too many tasks during production of his last film, the effects-heavy *Map of the Human Heart*. This time, however, he vowed that things would be different, and brought in an expert to oversee the complex creation of *Dreams*.

Visual effects producer/supervisor Ellen M. Somers served as Boss Film's head of production for eight years (where she originally met Ward during his brief tenure on *Alien³*), and as Warner Digital's vice-president of production. Somers was planning to take some time off after the closure of Warner Digital when

A collection of visual effects houses converge to render unique realms of paradise and purgatory for *What Dreams May Come*.

by Ron Magid

she was persuaded to join the *Dreams* production in March 1997 to evaluate and design the visual effects that would be required for the film's completion.

Somers's unique title reflects her work with the individual effects supervisor at each respective house involved in the production. Her role, however, expanded beyond keeping *Dreams'* CGI/miniature effects on time and budget to ensure that they remained true to Ward's vision.

The film's entire effects package had already been awarded to Mass.Illusions (*Judge Dredd*), which was being bankrolled by mini-major outfit Cinergi. But in April of 1997, on the eve of production, Cinergi was sold to Disney, and the company then backed out of Mass. Illusions in September. Suddenly, Somers had to bring in other effects houses to save the picture before cameras started rolling. "When Cinergi backed out of Mass.Illusions, we had two weeks to figure out what to do," Somers recalls. "Unfortunately, their new investor [The Manex Group] was not ready to take on the responsibilities of this project, so we basically four-walled Mass.Illusions from last September. We brought in equipment and finished staffing the other half of the personnel that was required. Due to their financial situation, Mass.Illusions wasn't able to dive into the job, and we slipped a month or two in research and development on what was already a very ambitious schedule to start with. It quickly became apparent that the volume of work was going to be larger than they could handle, so the job got broken down even further."

"Ellen found some very good people to deliver 50 percent of the images we needed, people we would never have thought of, including POP and Digital Domain," Ward recalls. "Also, because of her history of working with heavily art-directed material, she has a really good eye for what makes shots work, particularly

in terms of perspective and matte issues. She gets it, she's very patient, and she doesn't give up — I was very lucky to be able to work with her."

Quite literally, Somers attempted to divide the work along Biblical lines. POP took over 118 shots spanning the Victorian landscapes of Marie's World, Bridge City, the astounding Venetian Library, the ship graveyard and the inverted cathedral. The tabletop miniatures for the Hellish environments were built by Mike Joyce's Cinema Production Service, Inc. Digital Domain took on 54 shots, ranging from character animation to reconstructing an entire poppy-laden

ever connect.

Ward felt that the afterlife should be both familiar and alien. He explains, "As a painter, I've experimented with a certain color range, a little bit like oil-paint-meets-stained-glass, and I thought that if ever there was a film which would suit that color palette, this one would. My concept for paradise was this stained glass-style series of oil paintings, ranging from the German romanticism of Casper David Friedrich to the dark palette of Monet, with other late 19th-century artists and styles thrown in as well."

It wasn't simply artistry that drew Ward to the German romantic

The radically differing worlds of the afterlife. Opposite: Tracker, Albert and Chris arrive on the shores of Hell, a virtual ship graveyard. Below: The golden "stairway to heaven" of Marie's World. Both realms were created by Pacific Ocean Post



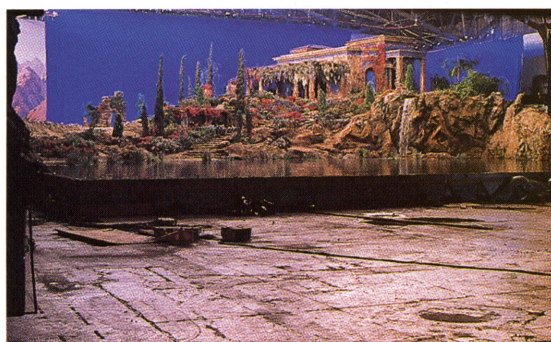
landscape. "Initially, we broke it up into a Heaven/Hell situation, barring a sequence or two," Somers says. "There was a stylistic issue, and the ability to keep creative continuity was of great concern."

Mass.Illusions' contribution entailed visualizing all of the Painted World — particularly the "painted" effects, some 44 shots depicting a wild, floral landscape of running pigment — which serves as Chris Nielsen's gateway to the afterlife. POP supported this work by compositing the painted backgrounds with the foreground actors. A critical matter for the artists was that this sequence had to evoke a strong response, lest audiences tune out of the film before its emotional one-two punch could

movement; its philosophy also provided some stimulus. "They believed that nature was more powerful than man," Ward says. "We created a paradise that's not tame, a place of roaring winds and twisted trees and steep mountains and mist. Chris's paradise is actually kind of a personal Hell — incredibly beautiful, but quite lonely, because he's there without the person he loves."

For three months prior to filming, visual researchers delved into countless art libraries searching for illustrations that would capture the vision Ward had in mind. Ultimately, Friedrich and other 19th-century masters helped to define and communicate Ward's vision to a whole range of artisans, from

Designing the Afterlife



A series of stage-shot and location-plate elements composited by Digital Domain to create Chris's home.

production designer Eugenio Zanetti to cinematographer Eduardo Serra, AFC and a half-dozen visual effects artists. "I think that's what drew me

to this project," Somers admits. "When I first came in, every wall in the production office was covered with the most amazing artwork that I'd ever seen, and many scenes were literally based upon classical 19th-century artists because Vincent was trying to create this underlying, subconscious, painterly tone."

Toward that end, Somers actively pursued freelance fine-arts professionals who could help translate Ward's vision to film. In turn, they were teamed up with the appropriate effects house. "Finding classically trained fine artists is a whole different world," she says, "and it's certainly difficult to marry with the technological world! Our effects companies were not always staffed with people who had the 'soul' that Vincent was looking for, so we had to search for artists who met Vincent's fine-art criteria and hire them to design and/or produce elements.

"We hired Josh Rosen as the art director for Mass.Illusions and installed him in that community. Although all of the people working on the project at Mass.Illusions — even the software people — were painters themselves, Josh's art direction had that certain feel we were looking for. He was a software developer we found on sabbatical in Italy doing illustrative work for a book, but on the side, he was off painting frescoes! We also hired Syd Dutton of Illusion Arts and Michael Lloyd to do matte paintings. And we basically went to POP because there were certain artists there that I knew would match Vincent's criteria — such as Deak Ferrand, who became an incredibly instrumental person on the film. Finding the right type of personnel was a bit like finding needles in a haystack."

Despite bringing ideal artists to *What Dreams May Come*, then overseeing and often making key suggestions on hundreds of effects shots, Somers insists that her role was primarily to shepherd the process

and ensure that elements were delivered on time. "The 'visual effects producer/supervisor' title does not make me the visual effects supervisor," she states. "I respected and relied upon the in-house supervisors. I was not the lead creative person delegating my vision to the effects facilities, but rather a liaison between the director, production departments and vendors. My title does reflect that I worked directly with the supervisors, making sure that the directions we took would satisfy the director's wishes and work for production. In order to protect production, it also gave me veto power and the responsibility of signing off on shots, which meant I had an equal opportunity to comment on them. But I would feel very bad assuming any sort of responsibility for creating the tools, because I did not. I simply supported people and made sure they were given what was needed in order to make those tools work."

Somers's support may have played a key role in keeping Mass.Illusions' team — including visual effects supervisors Joel Hyneck and Nicholas Brooks, line producer Donna Langston and software creators Pierre Jasmin and Pete Litwinowicz — on the project long enough to prove that their untested strategy for the Painted World's effects would work. Others had posited a more traditional approach, shooting the actors against a green-screen and comping them into digital landscapes created via multi-plane or 3-D matte paintings. Though that method might have worked, it would not have satisfied Ward's demands for artistic freedom and a sense of reality. "Vincent wanted Heaven to be a real place, as absolutely real, complex and dynamic as the world we're used to," Somers offers. "Those more traditional processes would have restricted the amount of detail and complexity we could later get into those shots, as well as the cinematog-

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Designing the Afterlife



The Autumn Tree (above and below) dramatically sheds its leaves as a sign to Chris about his wife's fate. Created by Digital Domain, the CG tree was grown organically using a series of L-system algorithms (opposite page). The leaves were added as a particle system, so their path could be controlled dynamically after they blew off the tree.

raphy. Vincent wanted to shoot in a very normal, naturalistic style; he didn't want those shots to feel mechanical. What Mass.Illusions brought to the picture was their ability to say, 'Go on location, shoot any way you want to, and we'll use the actual morphology and the vegetation in the plates as the basis for our effects.' But as we went through some arduous times, I had to remind people that there was a reason we chose Mass.Illusions. I felt they hit the nail on the head in terms of finding ways to create what Vincent wanted in the Painted World."

Having discarded motion control and greenscreen, Somers's team relied on extensive motion tracking and Lidar surveys of the locations to re-create camera motion and locate objects so the shots of the Painted World — complex, fluid camera movements captured in Montana's Glacier National Park — could later be immersed in running pigment. "We had to do some pretty amazing tracking to match those camera moves," Somers admits. "When we wanted to alter the topography and add 3-D objects, we made

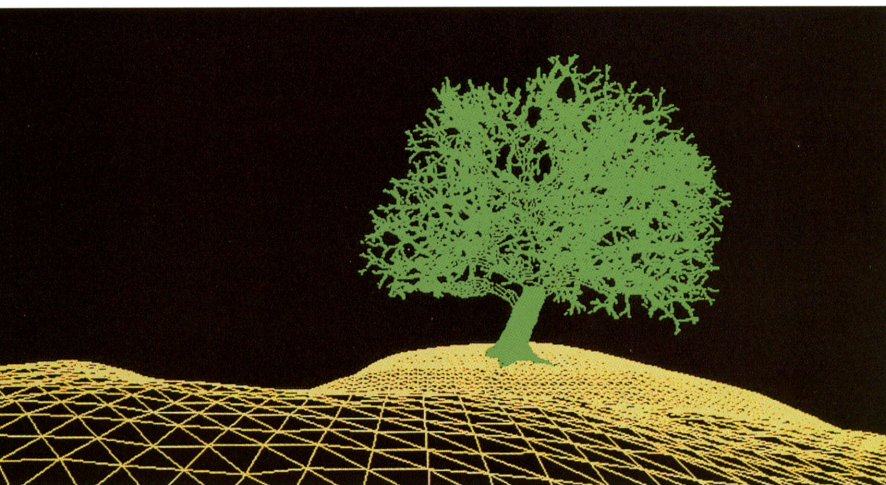
Lidar surveys at nights after the production was done shooting. Lidar is basically a radar survey, typically used in building dams and so on, which gives us a cloud of points that is an actual 3-D wireframe of the landscape. Then, by doing a traditional survey of the markers we placed on location, we could line up this wireframe with the shot and basically re-create both camera movement and topography."

Amazingly, every shot in the Painted World began as a photographic plate, yet ended up looking like a fresco freshly hand-painted by a 19th-century master. However,

because actors Robin Williams and Cuba Gooding Jr. had to remain 'normal,' their figures had to be painstakingly extracted from every shot. With the use of traditional tracking and the new system created and independently owned by the group (dubbed "machine vision" and based on state-of-the-art Computer Vision technology), the effects team was able to track the motion of the objects within a scene, and thus create motion maps. Scenes would then be further deconstructed into 15 to 30 mattes, then treated with particle-system brushstrokes to conceive the Painted World effect. Of course, applying dripping, swirling paint to thousands of flowers and leaves demanded both procedural and manual control. "We broke down each scene just like a painter would, deciding where we'd just throw a wash or add detail," Somers suggests. "Nature did not afford us the color balances typical of the paintings or styles that served as our references. We found that we needed to heavily, selectively grade our plates first before applying the strokes to achieve the feeling of a painting."

Beyond providing accurate camera-motion data, the "machine vision" software also yielded animation data describing the natural motion of the landscapes' vegetation and water surfaces, which enabled Mass.Illusions to apply their particle-system paints to petals and leaves blowing in the wind. "The applica-





tion actually gave us motion graphs of individual elements — a particular flower or tree — so we didn't have to re-create any animation," Somers explains. "The complexity of the landscapes gave an incredible depth and naturalism to this effect. The natural animation of the vegetation lent a believability to the environment that would have been virtually impossible to create strictly on the computer.

"Mass.Illusions then built a CG toolkit of a number of brushstrokes, so they could control the color, separation, thickness and dynamics of the paintstrokes themselves through certain handles. This allowed them to create paint rolling down blades of grass in certain shots. The amazing thing about this process is that we could have a crane on a 30' camera track, moving in every possible axis, and then basically apply brushstrokes to every leaf and every detail in that scene!"

Other effects artists contributed to the Painted World as well. Syd Dutton of Illusion Arts created multiple matte paintings for an elaborate 200' pullback from Robin Williams and the massive gnarled Friedrich Tree (named for artist Casper David Friedrich, whose work inspired this grotesque growth), which reveals the entire environment to be a re-creation of a canvass that Annie (Annabella Sciorra) had

painted for Chris. The only element used from the original plate was the helicopter zoom away from Williams (shot with a Primo 11:1 lens) and the hill he is standing on. Everything beyond the hill was reconstructed using photographic elements from five different location plates that were composited into one shot. All of these became references for Dutton's matte painting, which was done on a glass surface with the intent of maintaining the surface texture, style and feel of a painting.

"We re-created this landscape in 3-D based on an initial composite of all of these natural elements into this one perfect location, and then contracted Syd to repaint the surfaces of that landscape into a more perfect composition," Somers explains. "After his 17 different matte paintings were projected onto this 3-D landscape, Mass.Illusions applied its particle brushstroke system on top of that. Then we retracked everything to re-create the original helicopter move that was shot on the foreground element with Robin beside the tree."

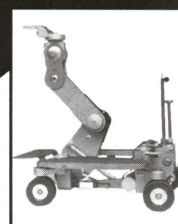
Digital Domain visual effects supervisor Kevin Mack breathed life into the Painted World's only indigenous species — the Painted Bird — as a 3-D character animation element that was supplied to Mass.Illusions for compositing. DD handled an additional 54 shots,

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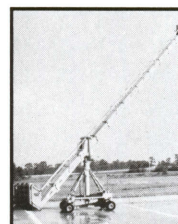
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Designing the Afterlife



Chris cavorts in the Painted World, as created by Mass.Illusions. Explains Ward, "My concept for paradise was this stained glass-style series of oil paintings, ranging from the German romanticism of Casper David Friedrich to the dark palette of Monet, with other late 19th-century artists and styles thrown in as well." The "paint" effects were integrated into location photography shot in Glacier National Park.

including reconstructing a full landscape for the sequence in which Chris flies through a field of poppies, and adding a ghostly blur to the character played by Cuba Gooding Jr. But their "main-event scene," according to Somers, "was the Autumn Tree, which blows apart as Chris connects with Annie and realizes that things are horribly wrong.

"The Autumn Tree wasn't constructed as a model, but actually grown organically using a series of algorithms in what's called an L-system. I understand from Kevin Mack that they actually had 12 pages of script to define the parameters of how the tree should grow, based on Vincent's art direction. And that was just for the form of the tree. The leaves were added as a particle system, so we could control their path dynamically when they blew off the tree. It was a huge rendering effort, and it certainly took a facility like Digital Domain to take that approach, but I think it really lent an incredible realism to the element."

Pacific Ocean Post took on 19 Painted World composites, in addition to handling the lion's share of the film's demanding workload. POP visual effects supervisor Stuart Robertson, working alongside designer/senior matte painter Deak

Ferrand and supervising matte painter Rocco Gioffre, envisioned some of *Dreams*' most arresting images. Particularly eye-popping are the 23 shots depicting the realm of Chris's young daughter — Marie's World. This setting was inspired by a 19th-century Victorian theater with a golden staircase, populated with jugglers, jesters and dancers.

On the banks of the indoor water tank at San Francisco's Treasure Island naval base, the crew constructed an immense "stairway to heaven," which was all that existed of Marie's World. In this sole instance, Ward and Serra permitted the use of motion control on the huge crane moves orchestrated over the set. The plan was to digitally expand the environment using 3-D matte paintings exclusively, but budgetary restrictions pushed POP's artistic imaginations to finish the breathtaking environment.

"What a feat that was!" exclaims Somers. "Deak Ferrand started from scratch, creating and designing that environment in one pass. POP extended the staircase in 3-D, but the surrounding and distant environment was all 2-D matte painting, because we couldn't afford any more 3-D paintings or models. POP added a lot of warpage to the

plates and matte paintings to create a sense of lens distortion and add more life to the move, so it didn't become just a backdrop. And then there were a number of elements — including hundreds of digital people that were animated and added on the stairs off in the distance, plus green-screen actor elements, moving clouds and mists and CGI waterfalls — that really brought it to life."

Collaborating with director Vincent Ward to envisage these spell-binding vistas was no simple task, Somers admits, but she says that the enterprise was well worth the effort. "He's an amazing man, but he's not the easiest guy to work with," she says. "You have to love being pushed, because he just won't accept anything less. I really do respect him."

The remarkable imagery of *What Dreams May Come* is a true testament to the creative team's determination to convincingly portray paradise and damnation on celluloid. Better still, their work also represents a symbiotic synthesis between two quite distinct art forms. "One thing that filmmakers and painters have in common is that they're trying to describe the world," Ward concludes. "I would like to think that this film has actually opened another perceptual way for artists to view the world, and a completely different range of options for how to describe it. I hope that ultimately, artists will choose to work in live-action film paintings — not matte paintings — and perhaps we have initiated that." ■



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THE **IMAGE** OF CHOICE

Black-and-White in Color

The comedic fantasy *Pleasantville* provides a unique opportunity for the digital and photochemical production worlds to momentarily merge.

by Bob Fisher

Photography by Ralph Nelson



Writer-director Gary Ross can't tell you precisely where he got the idea for the feature film *Pleasantville*, but it hatched in the back of his mind about six years ago. It took three years for the concept to take shape, a year to outline the script, and another three months to write it. The result is a black-and-white fairy tale which employs the gradual use of vivid color in many scenes to illustrate the personal and emotional growth of the film's characters.

Ross ventured into unexplored territory by making a hybrid movie. Some 163,000 frames of 35mm film were digitized for the purpose of removing most colors and manipulating others. This type of image conversion and manipulation has been routinely done in commercials, but never before in a live-action, feature-length film.

Ross describes himself as a contemporary fabler, and has earned Oscar nominations for scripting the comedies *Big* and *Dave*, but *Pleas-*

antville is his first outing as a director. The central characters in the picture are David (Tobey Maguire) and Jennifer (Reese Witherspoon), twin teenagers living in 1990s suburbia. David is addicted to reruns of 1950s TV shows, and his favorite program is entitled *Pleasantville*, whose prototype could be *Ozzie and Harriet*. Later in the story, a peculiar TV repairman (Don Knotts) gives David a remote control that magically zaps the twins into the black-and-white world of *Pleasantville*, where they have ready-made parents, the Parkers (Joan Allen and William H. Macy).

There is no breaking news or unpredictable weather in the perpetually cheerful yet gray-toned world of *Pleasantville*, and all roads stop at the edge of town. For David (a.k.a. Bud Parker), it's a perfect world where the high-school basketball team never misses a shot. It's a different story for Jennifer (a.k.a. Mary Sue Parker), who rebels against the blandness — thus causing her skin tone and clothing to return to their normal colors. Her influence on others has magical results. The town artist (Jeff Daniels) begins painting in color. When another character begins to develop skin tones, her husband assures her it will go away. With cautious hesitation, however, she replies, "I think I like it."

Some of the town's monochrome population struggles to maintain the status quo, while others begin to question the values espoused in their sterile world. A rose turns pink, the grass becomes green, and eyes turn hazel. *Pleasantville* becomes a divided city.

New Line Cinema cast Bob Degus in the role of *Pleasantville*'s producer, and he assumed responsibility for overseeing and driving postproduction, which involved creating nearly 1,700 visual effects shots. "This is the kind of film I've always dreamed about making," Degus says, "because it has the ability to touch people and make them think."

Ross recruited visual effects supervisor Chris Watts, who organized a boutique facility for the project (aptly dubbed *Pleasantville* Visual Effects), and color effects designer Michael Southard, who was responsible for supervising color-timing during the transfer of the original negative into digital data files and for colorizing the images. It was an ironic twist for Southard, who began his career at Color Systems Technologies (which included

camera negative on a video monitor before it was converted to data.

Phil Robinson (director of *Field of Dreams* and *Sneakers*) and Sean Daniels (producer of *Michael*) steered Ross to director of photography John Lindley, based on their own collaborations with him. Ross called Lindley, and told him the entire story of *Pleasantville* during their first discussion. "His enthusiasm for the story and the process was infectious," Lindley says. "I read the script before



colorizing black-and-white movies for Ted Turner) and has also added spot colors to black-and-white commercials and music videos.

"One of the initial hurdles was finding a practical way to convert the negative to data without compromising image quality," says Degus. "We investigated using a high-resolution digital film scanner, but that process would have been too slow and costly."

Watts suggested using the Philips Spirit DataCine at Cinesite Digital Imaging in Los Angeles for converting the film to data. Cinesite developed and plugged in new software for the task, which enabled Southard and senior colorist Richard Cassel to preview and color-time the

we met, and I loved it. I liked the allegory and the message, but what appealed to me most was that the photography was an integral part of the story."

Lindley and Ross began their preparations by looking at still photographs. "I had a book of hand-tinted, black-and-white pictures from Japan that provided a good jumping-off place," the cinematographer recalls. "We agreed that if you had a black-and-white scene with one person in color, [the color individual] should be desaturated so that he or she wouldn't jump out too much — except in some scenes, where that person should be heavily saturated in order to purposefully

Opposite: The men of *Pleasantville* get a pleasant surprise as the colorful Mary (Reese Witherspoon) strolls past their perch. **Above:** In the film's all-color opening, David (Tobey Maguire, right) accepts a unique remote control from a mysterious TV repairman (Don Knotts).

Black-and-White in Color

jump off the screen.”

Lindley and Ross decided to shoot in the standard 1.85:1 spherical format to stay closely in tune with the visual style of the 1950s. “The anamorphic format would have been overpowering,” the cinematographer explains. “Gary felt strongly that when David and Jennifer were in *Pleasantville*, it had to feel like the real world, where there is something around the corner, rather than it being a set for a TV show. I thought that was a great instinct on his part.”

There was considerable discussion between Lindley and Ross about the possibility of shooting in black-and-white and adding color in postproduction. However, after shooting many tests, they decided to originate their live-action shots with Eastman EXR 5248 and 5298 color negative films. “The driving factor was that every frame of the movie was going to be scanned, digitally manipulated and recorded back onto color intermediate film at 2,000 lines of resolution,” says Lindley. “When we tested black-and-white film, it was evident that by the time it was run through a recorder, it wouldn’t be sharp enough to create the feeling of reality we wanted. Modern color

films have multiple T-grain layers and therefore record much sharper and cleaner images.”

Cassel notes that using color stocks throughout the production would also eliminate any conflicts in grain and sharpness that might have resulted from intercutting color and black-and-white stocks.

One of the black-and-white tests was a shot of a woman sitting by a big bay window with her arm on the armrest of a chair. In order to simulate reality in the colorized version, the filmmakers had to add a pale-blue highlight, the reflected color of the sky. “Our tests revealed a lot of unexpected incidents like that, which give color its real dimension,” Lindley says. “It would have been an enormous undertaking to instruct the colorist [or digital artist] where and how to add reflected color light. It was a lot more accurate and efficient to start with a color image, even if it had to be radically manipulated.”

Lindley and Southard discussed how colorizing technology could be used without, in Lindley’s words, “taking all the oxygen out of the movie.” Most mixed-scene (color and black-and-white) images in *Pleasantville* are about 70 percent

black-and-white. “Michael [Southard] was essentially pre-timing the negative,” says colorist Cassel. “We’d look at a scene, and he’d tell me, ‘Don’t worry about the foreground, because it’s going to be black-and-white. But that mural on the wall has to stay in color, and I really want the reds to pop.’ He’d show me what colors in the mural were critical, and we’d concentrate on getting them as close to what he envisioned as possible. That saved time in the subsequent image processing on workstations. We were scanning at 2K resolution—1,920 pixels by 1,440 lines. That’s about 11 megs per frame. In the beginning, we were transferring two frames per second. At the end we got it up to four after getting new software from Phillips.”

During the offline editing process, Ross identified which scenes were going to be in the final cut, allowing Watts, Southard and the team of digital artists to get to work. One of the key tools they used was Shake, an open-system compositing software toolset created by the Venice, California, software firm Nothing Real which formed the basis for their proprietary interactive color-correction software program. Meanwhile, the *Pleasantville* team’s primary hardware consisted of Silicon Graphics 02 platforms, as well as SGI Octanes for more conventional applications using Matador paint software.

The team first developed some “2,000 art prints,” each of which represented a shot. This gave Ross a convenient frame of reference for the colors and saturation in every shot. His response provided a template for colorizing the rest of a given frame.

Two Solitaire film recorders were used to produce digital film dailies, which were output on fine-grain Eastman EXR 5245 color negative film. The recorders were calibrated so that the 45 emulated the imaging characteristics of the Eastman EXR 5244 color intermediate

Director of photography John Lindley surveys suburbia as he prepares for the next shot.



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Black-and-White in Color



Clockwise from top: The Parkers (William H. Macy and Joan Allen) confront the impact that her new hues are having on their marriage; Mrs. Parker is flattered by the way a local artist (Jeff Daniels) uses his expanded palette; the film's inventive design scheme is illustrated by the eye-catching impact of a brightly colored dress and umbrella against a white picket fence.

film used by the Lightning film recorder at Cinesite. "That enabled us to look at dailies that were a close approximation of the intermediate film that Cinesite was going to provide to Deluxe Labs as a master for release printing," says Degus. "There was little margin for error — maybe one printer light — if we were going

to maintain the integrity of our black-and-white images on color print film. Even a slight shift will give you a magenta or greenish cast where you want pure blacks. We needed every edge we could get, which included using the laser recorder at Cinesite to transfer images to the intermediate film as flawlessly as possible."

Lindley made several accommodations to shooting color film for conversion to black-and-white. He

used hard light to get crisp separations in scenes with monochrome characters. He also used a dimmer control board for lighting transitions when a black-and-white person left an area and a color character moved in. "The black-and-white characters would be hard-lit, even though they were occupying the same space where we had soft light on a color character," Lindley explains. "Almost every light was wired to a dimmer



board. The operator watched a monitor with a live video feed from the tap on the camera. We did a lot of cues on the fly as people moved around sets."

Lindley orchestrated lighting based on what Ross wanted the audience to watch. "Your eye naturally goes to color in a black-and-white world," the cinematographer notes. "If you pick up a newspaper that has one color photograph and a bunch of other black-and-white ones, everybody looks at the color one first. It's human nature." He further explains that the same dynamic applies when there are color and black-and-white characters in the same shot. "That was great if [the black-and-white person] was the character Gary wanted to highlight," he says. "But if it was a two-shot and he wanted to feature both characters, I sometimes adjusted the composi-

tion to give the black-and-white person a little more prominence.”

Lindley also did research to find out which lenses were primarily used on 1950s films, and eventually decided that a 40mm lens came close to a typical choice from that period. “It’s not a long lens, and it’s not terribly wide,” he observes, “but on close-ups, we were able to show the audience a lot of background, which was important. We also gave the movie a progressively more contemporary look as the story evolved and the characters became more modern in their thinking and action.”

Lindley did this very subtly with just a touch more aggressive camera movement, and by using longer 100mm and 150mm lenses — as in a sequence in which the first black-and-white kids cross over into the world of color. He also restricted the use of a Steadicam to that type of sequence. “The complexities and volume of details were a bottomless pit,” Lindley says. “Everything I had ever learned about color theory was up for grabs.”

The production’s main location was in Malibu, California, which established the Pleasantville town setting. Some practical interiors were found in Long Beach, while additional sets were built on stages at Warner Bros. in Burbank (including the street where the Parkers live).

Lindley credits Watts with coming up with fairly high-quality digital video dailies, but he felt they were more indicative than representative of the way the film would look. Ultimately, he stopped looking at the digital dailies because they weren’t representative of his lighting, and he felt it would be a mistake to respond to what he was seeing even on a subliminal level. Instead, he relied on the integrity of the tests he had shot. Lindley says that the film prints don’t look anything like the digital dailies. In retrospect, the cinematographer feels that not having some form of projected dailies was a real burden,



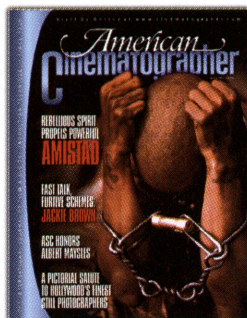
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especially on a film with such complex imagery.

Lindley's timing options at the lab were also limited. When there were color and black-and-white elements in the same frame, he points out, all he could do was make the images lighter or darker. He couldn't alter colors without affecting black-and-white elements of the scene, and that wasn't an option. "Gary, Mike and Chris have spent months making critical decisions about levels of saturation and testing it with audiences," Lindley says. "You can't just say, 'I'm the artist, and I want darker prints, and oh, by the way, it's going to be more saturated.'"

Lindley describes his camera-work in *Pleasantville* as "subdued."

He and Ross discussed using a voyeuristic point of view but pulled back from that idea. "The story and characters are so strong that they don't need to be underlined," he says. "We felt that if we leaned too hard on the concept, it would cave in."

Like the other films Ross has written, *Pleasantville* is rich with dialogue. How does Lindley motivate the audience to listen? "I just know what makes me listen," he replies, "and it's almost always the opposite of what you think. When people talk softer, I listen harder. When I see a character listening to what another character is saying, I tend to tune in. But those are mainly editing decisions. It's my job to give the editors the coverage they need."

Lindley made sparing use of diffusion, because he knew the images were going to be softer just by virtue of the postproduction process. Shooting actress Joan Allen was an exception. "I don't mind if the audience notices we've softened her look a bit," he says. "It's a nod to the conventions of filming actresses in the Fifties."

Most scenes were filmed with two Panaflex cameras covering the scene from a similar angle. Occasionally, Lindley cut the second camera loose and told the operator, "Okay, see what you can get." Though that footage accounted for a very low percentage of the film used, the cinematographer describes some of it as "really wonderful found art. I lit the scenes for the A-camera. If the B-camera got something that didn't look as if it was lit in context, I knew that Gary and the editors had the taste not to use it. We had two B-camera operators, Larry Karman and Henry Cline, and they were both innovative. Ken Ferris was the A-camera operator."

Cinesite's Bob Fernley notes that the intermediate film produced with the facility's Lightning laser recorder is a mirror image of the picture information in the data provided by the *Pleasantville* post-production team. "Our recorders are very solid in their calibrations and don't vary from day to day in their exposures by as much as half a printer light," Fernley says. "Even so, we generated daily test frames with a gray-scale patch and a second one for red, green and blue values. The lab used the tests as a guide to making changes in their processes for handling film that had run through our recorder that day."

Colin Mossman, executive vice president of technical engineering at Deluxe, points out that when you are printing black-and-white images on color print film, even a one-point difference in a printer light can create a sepia, blue or green overtone. "You would see a black-and-white image

with a faint tint," says Beverly Wood, vice president of technical services at Deluxe. "It may not be unpleasant to the eye, but it wouldn't be the pure blacks and whites Gary wanted. We are doing what is necessary to maintain the integrity of the images. We stop printing if we don't think everything is right."

Asked what he learned from this experience, Lindley replies, "Aside from the aesthetic and technological challenges, I learned that there's a new player in our universe. In some movies, the visual effects supervisor is just the person who does stuff with the monster and tries to make it look real. On other movies, like *Pleasantville*, he or she can have an effect on contrast, brightness and all of the things that the cinematographer normally controls. I was very lucky that Chris and his team were blessed with a creative aesthetic and respected my work. This is something every cinematographer should be aware of. Who knows what will happen with people who don't have that same feeling or talent?"

Ross believes the possibilities offered by color manipulation are virtually limitless. For example, early in *Pleasantville*, one of the characters wears an electric blue dress that draws the eyes of the audience like a magnet. That wasn't the result he wanted, so he toned down the blue. Technically, he says, there is no reason why the dress couldn't be red in China, where that color has a different symbolic meaning than it does in Western countries.

Degus summarizes the film's overall effect by quoting something that the fictional Mr. Parker says near the end of the film: "Gosh, I wonder if they realize how lucky they are to see colors like that?" Describing the effect that production had on him personally, he concludes, "It made me think about green trees and the blue sky and all of the things we take for granted. That's what makes this picture so special." ■

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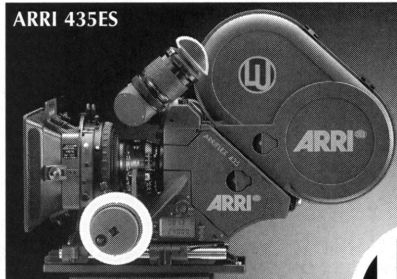
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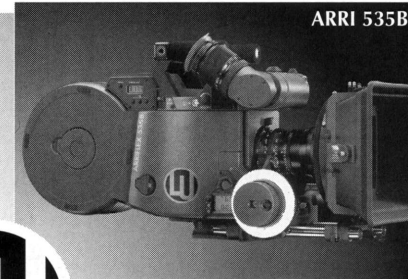


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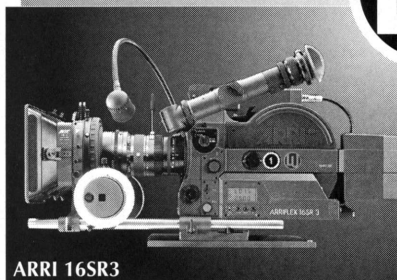
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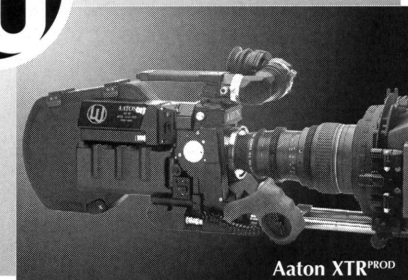
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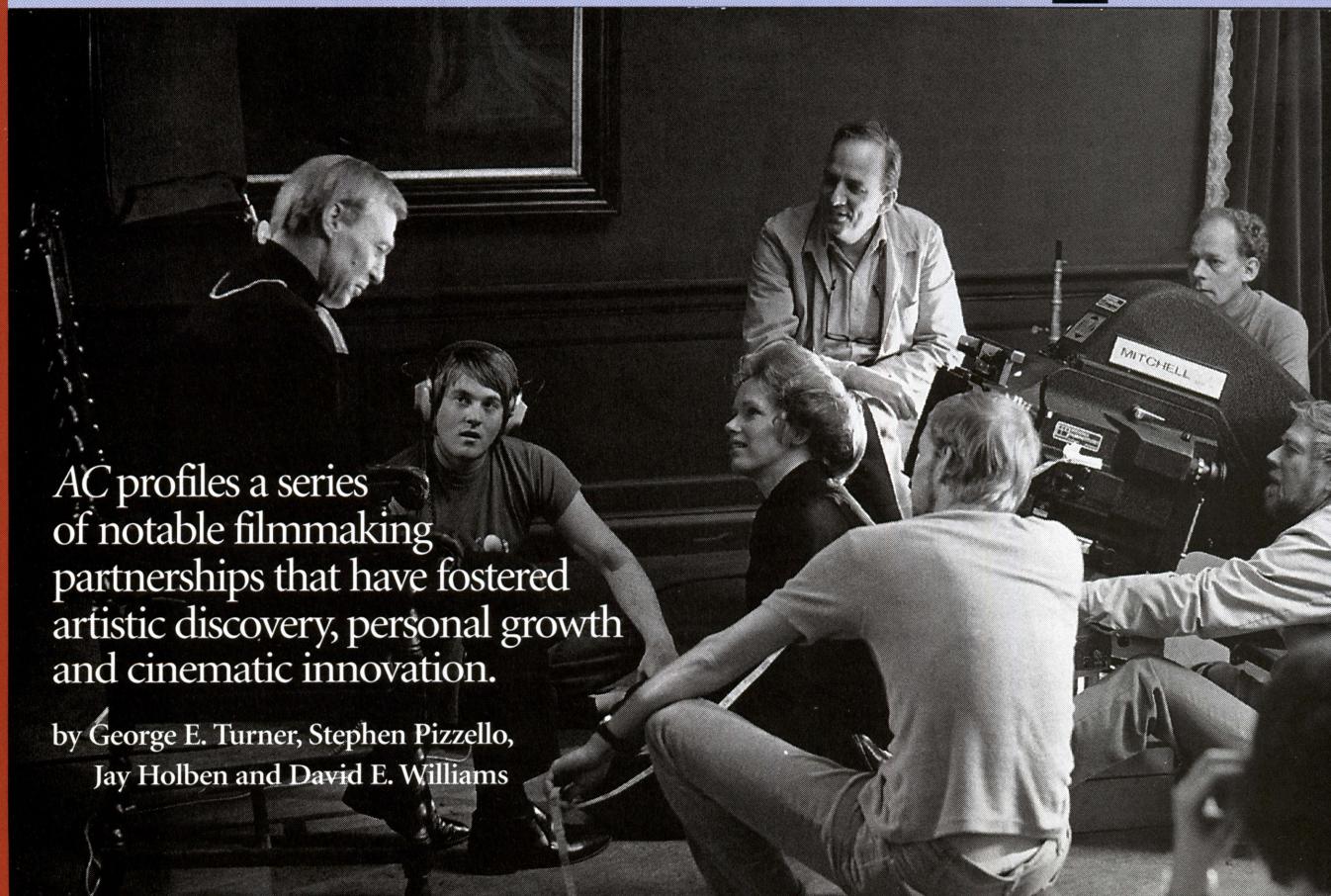
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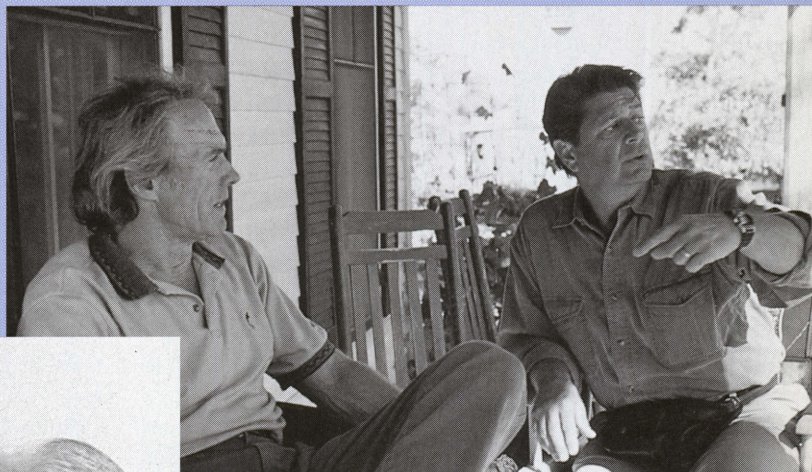
AC profiles a series of notable filmmaking partnerships that have fostered artistic discovery, personal growth and cinematic innovation.

by George E. Turner, Stephen Pizzello,
Jay Holben and David E. Williams





Clockwise from opposite, top left: Billy Bitzer (left) and D.W. Griffith on location in New York in 1920 for *Way Down East*; Frank Capra (left) and Joseph Walker, ASC at



The adage that “you’re only as good as the people you work with” is doubly true when it comes to filmmaking, one of the most uniquely collaborative of all art forms. Perhaps no production position is more representative of this spirit than that of the director of photography, who is charged with the responsibility of rendering and immortalizing the collective efforts of others — effectively creating a personal creative link with each and every person in front of and behind the camera.

Each month, *AC* explores this dynamic within the context of our feature stories on motion picture, television, documentary, commercial, and music video productions. But in this issue, we decided to specifically profile a series of notable collaborative relationships that have not only produced outstanding work, but inspired others to examine and nurture their own creative partnerships.

the Columbia Ranch; cameraman Robert Burks, ASC, who frequently collaborated with Alfred Hitchcock; at the camera, Robert Richardson, ASC confers with Oliver Stone while shooting *Natural Born Killers*; Clint Eastwood and Jack Green, ASC on location shooting *The Bridges of Madison County*; Alfred Hitchcock on the set; behind the lens, Sven Nykvist, ASC sets a shot as Ingmar Bergman observes from the far side of the camera while filming *Cries and Whispers*

Great Relationships

**Billy Bitzer
and D. W. Griffith**

Beyond a doubt, the most celebrated director-cinematographer team of the silent screen was that of D. W. Griffith and G. W. "Billy" Bitzer. Over a period of 16 years, this remarkable pair made more than 1,000 movies together. Among these films, which ranged from half-reels to 15-minute one-reelers to 14-reel spectacles, are many that contributed significantly to the growing art of motion pictures.

David Wark Griffith (1875-1948) hailed from a Kentucky family which had been ruined by the Civil War. The epitome of threadbare gentility, he became a theater critic, magazine writer, playwright and stage actor in Louisville before he went to New York in 1904. Under the name Lawrence Carter, he continued to write and appeared in several plays. Theatrical and literary people of the day were contemptuous of the primitive pictures being made by pioneering producers, but in 1907 "Lawrence Griffith" tried to sell a script of *Tosca* to Edwin S. Porter, the leading director/cinematographer of the time. Porter turned the script down but hired its author as the leading actor of *Rescued From an Eagle's Nest*. Griffith continued his efforts in film writing and acting until July 1909, when he was given a chance to write and direct at Biograph Studio. His first directorial effort was *The Adventures of Dolly*, photographed by the great Arthur Marvin.

During the making of *Dolly*, Griffith sought advice from a seasoned Biograph cameraman from Roxbury, Massachusetts — Gottfried Wilhelm Bitzer (1872-1944). A sturdy son of German immigrants, the ex-silversmith had begun work in 1894 as a mechanic-electrician at The Magic Introduction Company, forerunner of the American Biograph Company. Soon he was assisting his idol, W. K. L. Dickson, co-inventor of the first Edison movie

camera and probably the first American cinematographer. They made the first movies of an American president (McKinley) and covered the Spanish-American War.

Having seen Griffith's acting, Bitzer figured he couldn't "direct a flock of geese," but he quickly became Griffith's right-hand man, initiating him into the rudiments of filmmaking. He was amazed at the innovative ideas that came from his pupil. Their first picture together, *A Calamitous Elopement*, was released in August. "With this picture, the team of Griffith-Bitzer came into existence," Bitzer said in his autobiography, *Billy Bitzer: His Story*. "In all the years we worked together, even after I finally left Biograph with Mr. Griffith, there was never a written contract, only a handshake and our trust in each other."

Most historians have given Griffith and Bitzer credit for inventing almost every technique that followed: close-ups, cross-cutting for suspense, panning, dolly shots, hand-coloring, and much more. Actually, Edison's first movie, *Fred Ott's Sneeze* (1894) was a close-up, as was *The Kiss*, which followed shortly afterward. Edwin Porter used cross-cutting as early as 1902 in *The Life of an American Fireman* and *The Great Train Robbery* (1903), which ended with a hand-colored close-up of the robber chief firing his revolver into the camera. It is arguable, however, that Griffith was the finest director of his era, utilizing the most sophisticated methods of filmmaking with the best results, and Bitzer was the perfect man to bring his ideas to life. Critics and exhibitors argued about their work, which in the Biograph period was done anonymously. Some found excitement in its freshness, others were irritated or even angered by its departures from the familiar. More discerning patrons recognized that Biograph had a superior product.

Griffith eventually got at

loggerheads with his bosses. One bone of contention was his wish to make longer pictures — later called features — such as were already being done in France and Australia. Biograph wanted only one-reelers. Biograph released his 1911 two-reelers *His Trust* and *Enoch Arden* in one-reel segments. In 1913 Griffith told Bitzer, "We are just grinding out sausages, Billy, and will continue to do so as long as we remain here."

Griffith resigned in September and contracted to produce and direct

"In all the years we worked together, even after I finally left Biograph with Mr. Griffith, there was never a written contract, only a handshake and our trust in each other."

— Billy Bitzer

for the Reliance-Majestic program. Bitzer soon joined him, as did most of the leading players from Biograph, including Lillian Gish, Bobby Harron, Mae Marsh, Donald Crisp, Blanche Sweet, Henry B. Walthall and others. The Griffith-Bitzer team had made about 450 Biograph productions. Included were several two-reelers and the four-reel Biblical epic, *Judith of Bethulia*, all of which Biograph had refused to release. Ironically, they finally saw release in 1914.

During that same year, Griffith and Bitzer filmed the five-reel *Battle of the Sexes* in New York, then moved to the West Coast to finish the seven-reel *The Escape*. These were followed by two features, *Home, Sweet Home* and *The Avenging Conscience*, and the finest picture of its time, *The Birth of a Nation*. Released in 12 reels in 1915, the great drama of the Civil War, personally produced by Griffith's own company, stirred contro-

versy and praise in about equal measure. Bitzer invested \$7,000 in it and ultimately earned \$240,000.

Intoxicated by success, Griffith made the even bigger *Intolerance* (1919) — his masterpiece, but nevertheless a box-office failure. Its complex intercutting of four stories from different periods of history created more confusion than audiences could handle. Other features followed, including *Hearts of the World*, *The Great Love*, *A Romance of Happy Valley*, *The Greatest Thing in Life*, *The Girl Who Stayed at Home*, *True Heart Susie* and *Scarlet Days*. Bitzer photographed them all, solo, using the same old Pathé camera he had bought while at Biograph. He was hurt because Griffith brought in a second cameraman — Henrik Sartov — on *Broken Blossoms* (1919), a poetic horror tale that was their biggest success since *Birth*. Bitzer worked on several subsequent Griffith productions, including the classics *Way Down East* (1920) and *Orphans of the Storm* (1922), but was usually teamed with other cinematographers or passed over completely. Sometimes he didn't report when the studio called. "After we made *Way Down East*, my part in the making of Griffith films was [that of] just another cameraman," Bitzer recalled bitterly.

In 1926, Bitzer was the principal founder of the International Photographers of the Motion Picture Industries (IPMPI), forerunner of IATSE. Heavy opposition from the studio heads did not augur well for his future.

Griffith made several more silents, but only two talkies — the successful *Abraham Lincoln* (1930) and the dismal *The Struggle* (1931). Neither was shot by Bitzer. Both great innovators were considered too old-fashioned to function in the new order.

Bitzer died at the Motion Picture Home in Woodland Hills on April 29, 1944. Griffith, Lillian Gish

and Mary Pickford had visited him there. Griffith died on July 23, 1948 in Hollywood.

"Griffith thought only in terms of picture-making," Bitzer once said. "What Mr. Griffith saw in his mind we put on the screen."

— George E. Turner

Joseph Walker, ASC and Frank Capra

A kind fate brought together the great director Frank Capra (1897-1991), and equally great cinematographer Joseph Walker, ASC (1892-1985). Together they made 20 pictures — all of them good, some of them classics.

Walker was the perfect mix of artist, adventurer and technician. He filmed more than 160 feature productions, beginning with *Back to God's Country* in 1919 and ending with *Affair in Trinidad* in 1952. Between pictures he invented things, such as a zoom lens in 1922, the famed Williams Composite Process used in hundreds of films, and the variable diffusion lens. He had covered the Mexican Revolution as a wireless reporter. His first picture was made under incredible hardships in the Arctic, where the leading man died when his lungs froze.

Capra, who hailed from Palermo, Sicily, had studied engineering at California Institute of Technology, but left school to join the Army during World War I. He later worked in film labs and for independent producers. In 1921 he directed *Screen Snapshot* shorts for Columbia, and soon became a first-rate gag man and assistant director for Mack Sennett and Hal Roach. In 1926 he directed his first feature, *The Strong Man*, for First National.

Two years later he made a feature for Columbia, where he remained until 1939. The project, *That Certain Thing*, was a romantic comedy with Viola Dana and Ralph Graves, and the director of photography was Joseph Walker.

The little Sicilian bristled with nervous energy. He started the work-day early and finished late, leaving everybody exhausted but himself. After the picture wrapped, Walker told production chief Sam Briskin that he never wanted to be assigned to Capra again. Later, when he saw the picture at a theater, he was so impressed with Capra's "touch" that he went back to Briskin and asked to be considered for any future Capra productions. Soon he was teamed with Capra for Columbia's first "A" production, *Submarine* (1928), with Jack Holt and Ralph Graves. The success of the adventure film led to two more very popular Capra-Walker-Holt-Graves pictures, *Flight* (1929) and the superb *Dirigible* (1931).

In addition to action pictures, the director-cinematographer team became noted for making glamorous actresses more beautiful and expressive than ever. Two very different beauties, Loretta Young and Jean Harlow, received a boost up the ladder to stardom in *Platinum Blonde* (1931). That same year, Barbara Stanwyck also benefitted from highly dramatic roles in *Miracle Woman* and *Forbidden*. The starkly realistic *American Madness* (1932), a story of a bank run during the Depression (which was then at its worst point) gave Walter Huston his finest characterization to date. Spectacular scenes of a mob running amok in a bank are still spellbinding.

The most deliberately artistic of all the Capra-Walker collaborations is *The Bitter Tea of General Yen* (1933), a controversial drama involving a love affair between an American girl (Barbara Stanwyck) and a Chinese warlord (Nils Asther). Here Walker introduced his new invention, the variable diffusion lens, which was later bought by Mitchell Camera Co. and is still in use. The picture was banned in England, but was selected to open the new Radio City Music Hall. In the next Capra-

Great Relationships

Walker collaboration, *Lady For a Day* (1933), the camera focused on the time-worn face of May Robson, whose fine performance as "Apple Annie" earned her an Academy Award nomination.

The surprise hit of 1934 was *It Happened One Night*, a romantic comedy starring Clark Gable and Claudette Colbert. Little was expected of the picture, much of which occurred on a bus, but the magic touches supplied by Capra and Walker turned it into a classic. Its influence on future movies can hardly be overstated. *Broadway Bill* (1934), with Warner Baxter and Myrna Loy, a racetrack yarn, was also popular and widely imitated.

Capra's special blend of social satire and humanist philosophy, which he called "Capracorn," jelled in 1936 in *Mr. Deeds Comes to Town*, which featured Gary Cooper, Jean Arthur and a bigger mob than the bank runners of *American Madness*. This sequence was a test for Walker, who carried it off with seeming ease. An even bigger challenge was next: *Lost Horizon* (1937), a great audience favorite in which utopian fantasy and spectacle were added to all the other elements of the "Capracorn" melange. An uprising in China, an airplane crash in the Himalayas, and a stay in the lost paradise of Shangri-La, where life expectancy is more than doubled, gave patrons a memorable vacation from the Depression. A fine cast headed by Ronald Colman, performing in magnificent settings (built at the Columbia Ranch in Burbank) photographed with just the right combination of the fantastic and reality, made it all convincing.

A frantic yarn pitting a screwball household against industrial giants put Jean Arthur, James Stewart, Lionel Barrymore and Edward Arnold into the epitome of Capracorn idealism, *You Can't Take It With You* (1938). It was, Walker said, "a nightmare to photograph," with four

cameras covering a lot of frantic action in a room with only one removable wall. This highly regarded picture was followed by the even more popular — and difficult — *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington* (1939) which pitted Stewart and Arthur against a pack of powerful political nabobs (including portrayals by Claude Rains and Edward Arnold). Mr. Common Man again defeated the establishment for the good of the U.S.A. The long sequence in which Stewart stages a 'round-the-clock filibuster to stall passage of a crooked bill is photographed so imaginatively by eight cameras that it manages to make legislative tactics seem anything but dull.

Capra soon left Columbia, but Walker stayed on until 1952, making 33 more pictures there plus five on loan-out to other studios. One of the latter was for the short-lived Liberty Films, an independent production company set up at RKO Radio by Capra, William Wyler, George Stevens and Sam Briskin. The picture was *It's a Wonderful Life* (1946), produced and directed by Capra. In this holiday tale, an angel saves James Stewart from suicide and lets him relive his life to prove that he has a lot to be thankful for. Combining the supernatural with small-town family drama and a great deal of film noir style, the picture was regarded as a curio which had little chance of success. However, it emerged as a legendary film that is still a favorite Christmas booking on TV.

It was also the last of the 20 pictures Capra and Walker made together.

— G. T.

Robert Burks, ASC and Alfred Hitchcock

Director Alfred Hitchcock was born in London in 1899. After working as a title artist, art director and assistant director in Britain, he became a director, gaining widespread recognition in 1926 with his fifth film, *The Lodger, a Tale of the*

London Fog. By the mid-1930s he was world-famous as "The Master of Suspense," after helming such tension-filled melodramas as *The Man Who Knew Too Much*, *The 39 Steps* and *The Secret Agent*. With much fanfare, David O. Selznick brought Hitchcock to the U.S., where his first American film, *Rebecca*, won the Academy Award as Best Picture of 1939. Most of his movies over the next 36 years were made in America. He wanted — and got — the finest cinematographers available.

The first cinematographer to be associated with Hitchcock for a long period of time was Jack Cox, who was employed by British International Pictures when Hitchcock arrived there in 1927. Cox photographed Hitchcock's last five silent films, ending with *Blackmail* in 1929. (This was followed by a synchronized version of *Blackmail*, which is regarded as England's first sound-on-film talkie). A dozen additional Hitchcock/Cox collaborations followed. In England, Hitchcock also worked with such cameramen as Baron Vintigmilia, Curt Courant, Bernard Knowles, Harry Stradling, ASC and Glen MacWilliams, ASC.

Hitchcock's cinematographers in America were all from the top rank, beginning with George Barnes, ASC, who shot *Rebecca* (1940) and *Spellbound* (1945). Harry Stradling (Sr.), ASC, Joseph Valentine, ASC, Glen MacWilliams, ASC, Lee Garmes, ASC and Ted Tetzlaff, ASC each worked with the master director more than once. After returning to England for two pictures respectively shot by BSC fellows Jack Cardiff and Wilkie Cooper, Hitchcock returned to the U.S. in 1950 to make *Strangers on a Train*, a black-and-white gooseflesh yarn, for Warner Bros. He soon met the director of photography assigned to the picture: Robert Burks, ASC.

Burks was a youthful-looking 40 years old, and had been a cinematographer in Warners' special

effects department for years. Born in Los Angeles, he had found a job in the Warner Bros. lab when he was 19 and had a chance to observe some of the top cinematographers at work in the industry's largest special effects facility on Stage 5. He soon was made an assistant cameraman and worked with a half-dozen top special cinematographers. He became a director of photography in 1939.

In recommending Burks for promotion, Byron Haskin, ASC stated that "his work is thoroughly

Burks proved to be the perfect cinematographer for Hitchcock, who also had an encyclopedic knowledge of special effects and often wrote scenes that would create the opportunity to indulge in unusual camera imagery.

excellent in every respect... [He is] honest, straightforward, resourceful and, in the true sense, a gentleman." Burks emerged as a full-time production cinematographer in 1948. In *The Fountainhead* and *The Glass Menagerie* he had utilized the somewhat Germanic visual style that Hitchcock liked. Burks proved to be the perfect cinematographer for Hitchcock, who also had an encyclopedic knowledge of special effects and often wrote scenes that would create the opportunity to indulge in unusual camera imagery.

Strangers earned Burks Hitchcock's respect, as well as an Academy Award nomination. One legendary scene in which Robert Walker strangles Laura Elliott is shown as a distorted reflection in the victim's fallen glasses. Burks's long-time associate, H. F. Koenekamp, ASC, came aboard to help with some startling scenes in which a merry-go-round

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flies out of control.

During the ensuing 14 years, Burks photographed 11 more of Hitchcock's best-known essays in suspense. On all of these projects, his operative cameraman was Leonard J. South, ASC. Both men became close friends of the Hitchcock family. The other Hitchcock-Burks collaborations are *I Confess* (1953), *Dial M For Murder* (1954, 3-D, Warner Color), *Rear Window*, (1954, Technicolor), *To Catch a Thief* (1955, VistaVision, Technicolor), *The Trouble With Harry* (1955, VistaVision, Technicolor), *The Man Who Knew Too Much* (1956, VistaVision, Technicolor), *The Wrong Man* (1957), *Vertigo* (1958, VistaVision, Technicolor), *North by Northwest* (1958, VistaVision, Technicolor), *The Birds* (1963, Technicolor), and *Marnie* (1964, Technicolor).

I Confess, filmed in practical settings in Quebec, was a departure for Hitchcock, who preferred to work in the studio whenever possible. Parts of *The Man Who Knew Too Much* were photographed in Marrakesh and London. *Dial M For Murder* was among the last pictures made in Natural Vision, the best 3-D process of that time, and was free of the gimmickry that marred most 3-D productions. The scene in which Grace Kelly stabbed Anthony Dawson with her scissors proved to be highly effective. Burks provided outstanding VistaVision photography for five Hitchcock productions from 1955 to 1958.

For one stunning shot in *Vertigo*, Hitchcock wanted to capture James Stewart's terror as he looked down the inside of a tall church tower by changing perspective during the scene. The heretofore unheard-of feat was accomplished by building a scale model that would lie on its side, and then combining a lens zoom forward while the camera was dollied back. In *North by Northwest*, Cary Grant and Eva Marie Saint had to climb all over a soundstage replica

of the Mount Rushmore sculptures. *The Birds*, in which our feathered friends try to take over the world, was surely the wildest picture of all.

The collaboration ended on May 13, 1968, when Burks and his wife, Elysabeth, died in a fire at their home. Hitchcock and South were devastated. South photographed *Family Plot* (1976), the last Hitchcock picture. The director died on April 29, 1980. In 51 years as a director, he completed 53 features.

Burks received Academy Award nominations for the black-and-white images of *Strangers on a Train* and for the color photography of *Rear Window*. (Color and black-and-white pictures were judged separately at that time.) He later won an Oscar for the color photography of *To Catch a Thief*, a magnificent example of VistaVision technique. In 25 years as a director of photography, Burks made 55 features.

Hitchcock never won an Academy Award for directing, even though he was probably the world's most famous director and he was nominated five times. He did receive the Academy's Irving G. Thalberg Memorial Award in 1968 for "a consistently high quality of motion picture production," as well as a Life Achievement Award from the AFI and an honorary doctorate from USC. France made him a Chevalier of the Legion of Honor, a Commander of Arts and Letters and a Knight of the Legion of Honor of the Cinematheque Francaise. In 1980, the year of his death, he was knighted by the Queen of England.

— G. T.

Sven Nykvist, ASC and Ingmar Bergman

Spanning three decades, the collaboration between director Ingmar Bergman and cinematographer Sven Nykvist ranks as one of the greatest teamings in cinematic history. The two men's names are irrevocably linked in the minds of

the world's film scholars, who credit the Swedish duo with expanding (or, more accurately, exploding) the parameters of the medium. The magnitude of their achievements cannot be understated; the pair's work together helped to redefine motion pictures as an art form, opening up limitless vistas of visual creativity, intellectual insight and raw emotional impact.

Bergman began his artistic career in Swedish theater circles, and made his debut as a motion picture director with the 1945 feature *Crisis*. Nykvist, a native of Stockholm who had studied at the city's Municipal School for Photographers, first worked with Bergman in 1953 on *Sawdust and Tinsel* (a.k.a. *The Naked Night*), sharing cinematographic duties with Göran Strindberg and Hilding Bladh (who had trained both Nykvist and Strindberg). Nykvist's partnership with the great director began in earnest on the classic 1959 film *The Virgin Spring*, and subsequently produced such masterworks as *Through a Glass Darkly* (1961), *Winter Light* (1962), *The Silence* (1963), *Persona* (1966), *The Hour of the Wolf* (1968), *The Passion of Anna* (1970), *Cries and Whispers* (1972), *The Magic Flute* (1973), *Scenes from a Marriage* (1973), *Face to Face* (1976), *Autumn Sonata* (1978), *The Serpent's Egg* (1978) and *Fanny and Alexander* (1983). The cinematographer earned Academy Awards for both *Cries and Whispers* and *Fanny and Alexander*.

A consummate film artist, Bergman held high standards for his cameramen. As he noted in the seminal text *Bergman on Bergman*, "For me, two things about a cameraman are fundamental. The first is that he shall be technically absolutely perfect, and at the same time first-class on lighting. The second [is] that he must be first-class at operating his own camera. I don't want any camera operators on my films. The cameraman and I come to an agreement

about what is to be included in the image. We also go through everything to do with lighting and atmosphere in advance. And then the cameraman does everything in the way we've agreed on."

Bergman went on to note that his collaboration with Nykvist rose from the ashes of his long partnership with cinematographer Gunnar Fischer, who shot many of the director's acclaimed early films, including *Smiles of a Summer Night* (1955), *The Seventh Seal* (1956) and *Wild Strawberries* (1957). Bergman's comments on this break are telling, revealing

"The light in the images is something I hardly think can ever be attributed to just one of us. Perhaps I can put it like this: the impulse comes from me, and the enormously careful, subtle and technically clever execution is all Sven Nykvist's work."

— Ingmar Bergman

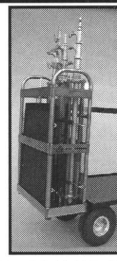
that talent alone cannot always ensure a durable bond: "Little by little, Gunnar Fischer's ideas and mine parted company, and this meant that the solidarity, the feeling of personal contact and interplay between us, which was so necessary to me, became slack — largely, perhaps, because I became more and more domineering, more and more tyrannical, and more and more aware that I was humiliating him. Sven Nykvist is a much tougher personality. I've never had any reason to be nasty to him."

Further analyzing his relationship with Nykvist, Bergman noted that the two eventually reached an almost telepathic state of synchronicity. "We've developed a private language, so to speak. We hardly

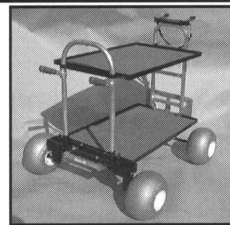
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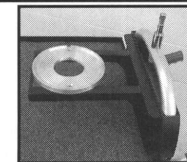
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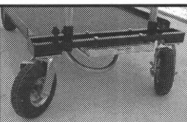
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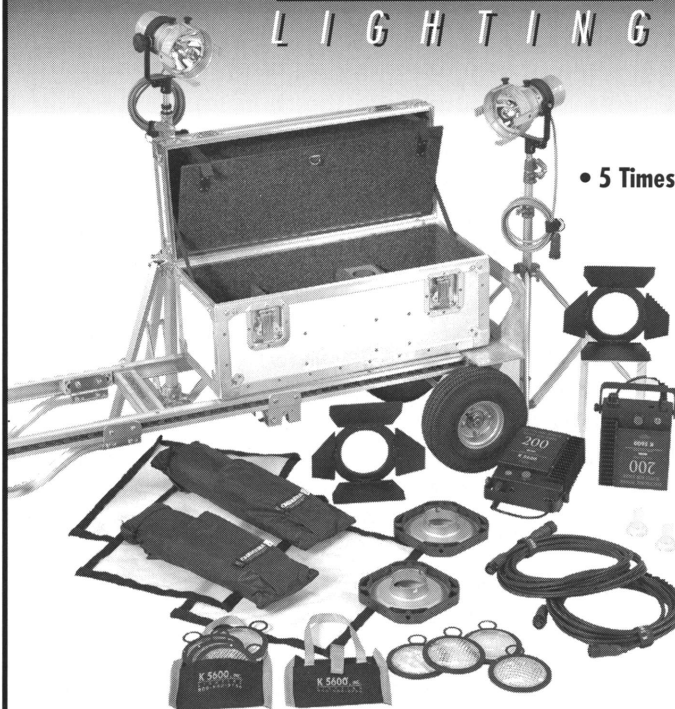
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need to say a word. Before the filming begins we go through the film very carefully, to see how we imagine the lighting, check the lighting conditions, and then solve all lighting problems together.

"The light in the images is something I hardly think can ever be attributed to just one of us," the director added. "Perhaps I can put it like this: the impulse comes from me, and the enormously careful, subtle and technically clever execution is all Sven Nykvist's work."

Nykvist, for his part, has consistently credited Bergman with opening his eyes to the full emotional range of lighting. As he told *American Cinematographer* in 1972, "I owe a great debt to Ingmar, for he gave me my passion for light. Without him I would have remained just another technical cameraman with no great awareness of the infinite possibilities of lighting. Today, I hate purely technical camerawork. I have a great sense that every picture I work on is different and demands a different approach. And I believe that the audience, supposedly indifferent to lighting subtleties, and responsive only to acting and story, will appreciate our work. People must do more than see a motion picture. They must have a feeling for it, and my experience has told me that they appreciate and are held spellbound by a certain mood that is created for them by the proper utilization of light. That is the key to it all. That is what photography is all about."

Throughout their careers, both Bergman and Nykvist have consistently championed the virtues of simplicity. In *Bergman on Bergman*, the director told his interviewers that he admired his cameraman's ability to see past the logistical aspects of film production and pinpoint the narrative core of a story. "More often than not, it's the people who know nothing or very little who use the most elaborate

apparatus," he said. "It's their ignorance that complicates the whole procedure. Take a cameraman like Sven Nykvist, a technically clever cameraman, one of the cleverest in the world. All he needs to work is three lamps and a little greaseproof paper. One part of knowing what to do is simply the ability to eliminate a mass of irrelevant technical complications, to be able to peel away a mass of superficial apparatus."

Indeed, after being named as the recipient of the ASC's International Award in 1996, Nykvist recalled the stripped-down pleasures of his early work with Bergman, who in those days was making films for \$100,000 with crews of 8 to 10 people and a handful of actors. "That was a very nice way to work," the cameraman related. "Everyone did everything. Everyone helped everyone else. It was like a family."

In his 1972 interview with *AC*, Nykvist confirmed that the intervening years of experience hadn't changed his fundamental principles on the set. "I see a great many films and I have come to the conclusion that a large number of pictures today are overlit. Technical perfection in terms of camera and lenses seems to have been matched by a desire to fill the screen with lots of perfectly placed and calculated light. I just don't go along with this, and I have Ingmar Bergman to thank for letting me experiment with a kind of cinematography which, by utilizing true light where possible, seems to me to do greater justice to the medium."

"Of course, Bergman is unique," Nykvist conceded. "I have had the privilege of working with him since 1953 and, through him, have learned to better understand the ultimate possibilities of cinematography. Because he had worked in the theatre, he was intensely interested in light and its uses and how it can be applied to creating a given atmosphere. Bergman has been making pictures for many years, and

he knows everything about the camera as a technical instrument. He has a mind and an imagination that takes in not only the limits of poetic imagery, but — equally — the scientific aspects of filmmaking. He has done away with 'nice' photography and has shown us how to find truth in camera movement and in lighting."

—Stephen Pizzello

Jack Green, ASC, Clint Eastwood, Bruce Surtees and Joe Dieves

Few professionals have had the extraordinary opportunity to work under two mentors who guided and shaped their future. Director of photography Jack Green has had good fortune in that regard.

The son of a barber, Green was schooled and employed in the family business long before dreams of a profession behind the lens entered his mind. His father dabbled in photography, however, and maintained his own darkroom. He introduced young Jack to the enticement of images at a fairly early age. "Once I was old enough," recalls Green, "my father would allow me into his darkroom to watch. He built a little contact printer for me out of wood, a lightbulb and opalized glass, and I'd make my own contact prints and do my own developing. I did this many times over the years, and as a result I have this wonderful affinity for the smell of chemicals and darkroom equipment."

Green's fascination with photography wasn't strong enough to keep him from taking a job cutting hair, until a repeat customer spurred his interest in moving images. "This was in the days when people came in for haircut every two weeks or so," explains Green. "Through repeat business, I got to know a cameraman named Joe Dieves. He stopped in regularly and we would just talk images the whole time — he was just wonderful to me. At first I was just

interested in what he did for a living because it involved photography, but the more we talked the more intrigued I became. After about six or eight months of cutting his hair I worked up the nerve to ask him if I could go watch him work.

"He went one better — he got a job and asked me to come along as his assistant. The job had all of the elements that were inspiring to me — taking pictures, and the excitement of working in the movie business. After spending time standing around cutting hair, getting out to do something like that was pretty darn thrilling. I got some more jobs with Joe after that, and it was only a matter of time before I stopped being a barber.

"Joe was such a generous person. He would bring home equipment the night before a shoot, and I would go over to his family's house with my wife. They would feed us and we'd have a laughing time. After dinner he'd have the equipment spread all over his living room floor and we would put it together. I had such a good time, I really got hooked on film. And he continued to cover my act — watching over me and seeing to it that I was always finding work, and that I was put with people who weren't afraid to instruct."

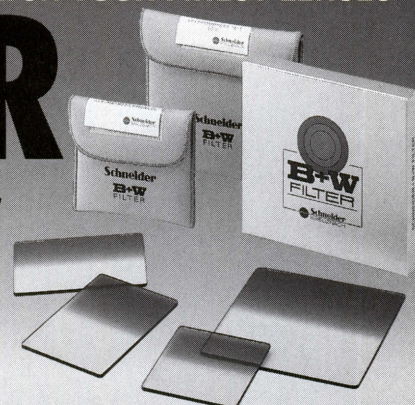
Green pursued work as an assistant on industrials, documentaries and commercials before landing a job with Wescam in Los Angeles working on the aerial unit for *Tora! Tora! Tora!*. Spending more time in the air, Green toiled for a while with Tyler Systems before accepting more assisting jobs with such ASC cameramen as Donald Morgan, Michael Watkins and Rexford Metz. The latter invited Green to work as B-camera operator on *The Gauntlet*, a film directed by Clint Eastwood. Further work with Metz led Green to the A-camera operating slot on *Every Which Way But Loose*, also starring Eastwood. Green's next foray with Eastwood, on *Bronco Billy*, would serve to form the

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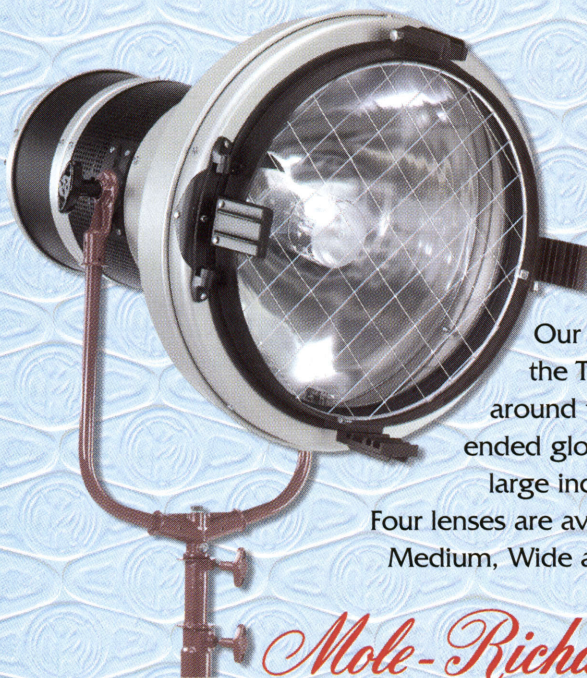
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foundation of an almost symbiotic relationship between the two filmmakers. Green continued working as an operator on most of Eastwood's films, and eventually teamed up with director of photography Bruce Surtees on *Firefox*. A Los Angeles native and son of the late cinematographer Robert Surtees, ASC (*Ben Hur*, *Mutiny on the Bounty*), the younger Surtees earned his own place in history with an Academy Award nomination for Bob Fosse's *Lenny* in 1974. Surtees also worked with directors Gordon Parks (*Leadbelly*) and Arthur Parks (*Night Moves*) before teaming up again with Eastwood on *Firefox*. Previously, the duo had collaborated on eight films, including *Dirty Harry*, *Play Misty for Me* (Eastwood's directorial debut) and *The Outlaw Josey Wales*. Surtees's extremely low-key style earned him the nickname "Prince of Darkness."

"To be perfectly honest," Green confides, "at the time we did *Firefox*, Bruce just didn't like me. Clint and I had established a relationship that sort of infringed upon the traditional hierarchy of the set. But Bruce and I did four pictures with Clint, and by the end of the last one we were really good friends. Clint, Bruce and I would discuss each setup and then distill all of our ideas into the scene. When Bruce was hired to shoot *Beverly Hills Cop*, he invited me to be his operator and we commuted to work together every day.

"Bruce and I spent quite a bit of time together after that, and I went with him once to his mother's house in Carmel. In one room of their home there was a display case with his father's three Oscars, and plaques for more than a dozen nominations. I stared at them in awe. I was face to face with Bob Surtees's Oscar for *Ben Hur*. Mrs. Surtees said, 'Go ahead, pick it up! It's wonderful, isn't it? Maybe you'll win one for yourself someday.' My feet didn't touch the ground for days."

Two years before Green worked with Surtees on *Beverly Hills Cop*, Eastwood had approached him with the prospect of stepping into the role of cinematographer on his film *Honkytonk Man*. Green politely declined, worrying that the promotion might damage his relationship with Surtees. But after their collaboration on *Beverly Hills Cop*, Green approached Surtees with the notion. "I told Bruce, 'You know, one of these days Clint is going to ask me to move up again, and I don't want it to affect our friendship.' He replied, 'Jack, don't let it bother you. I moved up over somebody, you're going to move up over me someday, and someday somebody else will move up over you. That's life in this business. It would be a wonderful thing if it could happen for you.' That's what good friendship is all about, and that's how things get passed on in this industry.

"Now, Bruce is part of me every time I light a set," Green continues. "I loved the minimal amount of lighting he used. One thing I learned from Bruce was to leave a small footprint on the work. I like to keep my work as natural as possible while still making it dramatic. Some of Bruce's films, like *Beverly Hills Cop*, have full, rich lighting, but on other projects he's gone completely the other way, to the point where he's actually extracting light. He often uses more of a Rembrandt style, whereby a scene might have a single source and very little else. He usually works at a very low key and I think his photography is just brilliant.

"After Bruce did that for me, I felt I should do something to pay back Joe Dieves. I said to Joe, 'I owe you so much. What can I do to pay you back?' And he answered, 'The best thing you can do for me is to pass along what I taught you. You'll pay me back.'

"Since then, I've almost felt like it was an indictment to pass on

[that knowledge] whenever I can. Bruce and Joe were instrumental in forming my attitude about giving something back to the industry, and never holding back or coveting my information. Teaching has its own rewards: not only am I able to pay my teachers back, but I am also able to get so much out of it myself."

— Jay Holben

Robert Richardson, ASC and Oliver Stone

Few filmmaking partnerships have produced a mutual resumé as creatively and critically successful as that of cinematographer Robert Richardson and writer/director Oliver Stone. In the dozen years since their first pairing on the documentary-flavored 1986 film *Salvador*, a compelling exposé of the civil war in El Salvador, the two men have explored a diverse array of human conditions and events. Their pictures together have not only displayed an evolving technical virtuosity, but a raw emotional power that has propelled several of them beyond the realm of popular culture and into the national spotlight.

Indeed, many of these films became artistic political statements that will forever be linked with their subjects. The stories of veterans re-experiencing the horrors of Vietnam and weeping in the darkness while watching *Platoon* (1986), the firestorm of controversy surrounding the "counter-mythology" of *JFK* (1991), and the debates regarding the nature of violent imagery in the media satire *Natural Born Killers* (1994) will not soon be forgotten. Meanwhile, the pictures *Wall Street* (1987), *Talk Radio* (1988), *Born on the Fourth of July* (1989), *The Doors* (1991), *Heaven & Earth*, (1993) *Nixon* (1995), and *U-Turn* (1997), have each sparked discussion, deliberation and controversy: exactly what art is meant to achieve.

Richardson has also been widely honored for his achieve-

ments, earning an Academy Award for *JFK*, Oscar nominations for *Platoon* and *Born on the Fourth of July*, five ASC Outstanding Achievement Awards nominations, and three IFP/West Independent Spirit Award nominations.

While recommending Richardson for membership in the American Society of Cinematographers in 1992, cameraman Allen Daviau, ASC succinctly wrote, "[Richardson's] association with Oliver Stone is one of those historic director/cinematographer collaborations reminiscent of Griffith/Bitzer, Eisenstein/Tissé, or Stevens/Mellor, in which an extensive series of films results. For each such collaboration [with Stone], Bob has achieved a new look, a new texture, while maintaining one of the most dynamic moving-camera styles that I have ever seen."

A native of Cape Cod, Richardson grew up in Massachusetts and later enrolled at the University of Vermont, where he became an avid movie fan and was particularly influenced by the work of Ingmar Bergman. Pursuing his interest in cinematography, Richardson schooled at the American Film Institute under the guidance of such master ASC cameramen as George Folsey Jr., Sven Nykvist and Nestor Almendros. After graduation, he found work doing inset and second-unit work, but he primarily shot documentaries.

In 1985, Richardson photographed a documentary in El Salvador for England's Channel 4, spending a month each with both government troops and guerrilla forces. It was this work that caught the eye of Oliver Stone, to whom Richardson had been recommended for the director of photography position on *Salvador*, which would become the cameraman's first theatrical film. During the production, Stone was impressed with both Richardson's work and sensitivity to the subject matter, and began to

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discuss with him his ideas about making *Platoon*, a project based on his own combat experiences. "I was honored," the cinematographer noted in the April 1987 issue of *AC*. "Oliver had been carrying *Platoon* around in his head for 10 years, ever since he'd returned from Vietnam. I knew it was a very personal and important film for him."

With this foundation laid, Richardson and Stone continued to forge their relationship over the course of subsequent productions. The cameraman would later note, "I've become very spoiled by Oliver because of the material I get from him. I have very high expectations for the subject matter that I shoot. He also brings a lot of passion to his work." Only a few months later, the duo would be filming *Platoon* in the dense jungles of the Philippines, where they battled the heat, dust, bugs, and other difficulties of film-

ing in the bush. Their efforts paid off, resulting in a 1987 Best Picture win that helped to re-open discussion about the Vietnam War.

In the coming years, the duo would again revisit the Vietnam era, first by exploring the transformation of Ron Kovic from soldier to antiwar activist in *Born on the Fourth of July*, and later, the life of Le Ly Hayslip, a Vietnamese woman whose life is painfully destroyed and rebuilt in *Heaven & Earth*. For both pictures, the cameraman utilized an evolving visual language to reflect the characters' unique perspectives.

A signature technique that Richardson has utilized while working with Stone is the interweaving of textured imagery in order to amplify emotions and accent specific imagery. Super 8 reversal stocks, black-and-white 16mm, and various video formats are intertwined with vintage stock footage and silky-

smooth 35mm color anamorphic photography, and then carefully blended by Stone and his expert editors. These methods were used to poetic effect in *JFK*, which shifts between past, present and fictional passages while exploring the assassination of John F. Kennedy in an impressionistic style. This photographic strategy was taken to new heights in *Natural Born Killers*, a fractured crazy-quilt of images that reflect the warped minds of the tale's serial-killer protagonists.

Interestingly, *NBK* proved to be a significant hurdle for Richardson, and tested the relationship that he and Stone had built, proving that even the most successful collaborations are not without difficulty. In the November 1994 issue of *AC*, the cinematographer remarked, "The situation was, quite clearly, that I didn't want to do the film. I simply didn't have the level of respect that

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I'd had for the written material on, say, *Born on the Fourth of July* or *JFK*. Both of those aroused me in a great deal of historical respect and intellectual curiosity."

Stone admitted that he freely played the "friendship card" in enticing the reluctant Richardson to join the production. "I feel a lot of love for Bob; he's a friend, and I've grown with him over the years," the director explained. "He was in a strange place on this movie. I was in the middle of a divorce, so I was in a difficult place myself. I asked him to stay on because I was feeling very vulnerable."

The cameraman eventually took the assignment, but conceded that he "only agreed to do the film out of love for Oliver and our relationship; he's like an older brother." Richardson added, however, that "once I began the process, it truly became a nightmare for me."

The stress that rose from these from extreme personal and professional dilemmas manifested itself in Richardson's work, compelling him to push for ever-more delirious cinematography. "In the end though, all of the strife was what provided me with the creative juices to do my work," he explained. "Had I been in love with the material, I might not have been so aggressive in my approach; my angst wouldn't have been as much a part of the camerawork."

Stone found the production equally cathartic, commenting, "What makes me happy is that Bob seems excited by the results. He was in contradiction with himself, but I think that gave his work a lot energy. At first I'm sure he was thinking, 'I'll just do this to make Oliver happy, then I'll forget about it.' But now I think he's really proud of his work, and he should be, because it's

outstanding."

Later, while working together on *Nixon*, the filmmakers reflected on the nature of their friendship, with Stone remarking, "We know each other like a husband and wife do. We fight. We disagree. But it doesn't get so emotional that we lose our bond. It was something we felt right from the beginning. It was one of those situations where someone walks into the room and you just know that he's going to be connected to you in this life."

"The long-term friendship creates a strong article of faith," Richardson confirmed. "It can get tough at times. I've been married for 10 years and that's been tough at times, too. But it's also as fulfilling as [a relationship] can get. It's like that with Oliver. It won't get any better."

— David E. Williams ■

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Soup du Jour

AC demystifies the special processing techniques offered by motion picture laboratories to enhance and manipulate imagery.

by Christopher Probst

Given the number of images bombarding viewers daily via feature films, television shows, commercials and music videos, the desire to create a distinguishing visual style has become a paramount concern among today's cinematographers. Aiding in this quest for diversity, motion picture laboratories now offer a variety of custom processes to enhance and modify a director of photography's work. Cinematographers have myriad methods at their disposal, from silver-retention processes to more esoteric ideas, such as stripping the anti-halation backing off an original camera negative. Readers should also be aware that Eastman Kodak is now offering two new color print films — Vision 2383 and Vision Premier 2393 (formerly code-named "Clipper I and II") — which may be used as alternatives to some of the contrast-affecting processes explained in the following pages (see New Products, p. 98).

What follows is a comprehensive survey of the options currently available to directors of photography. Bear in mind that we've interviewed representatives of the companies that have developed these processes, and that divergent opinions about their relative merits do exist in Hollywood's technical community. The ultimate purpose of this article is to present an overview that will hopefully make the laboratory landscape a bit less mystifying.

SILVER RETENTION

A forerunner of the seemingly endless image-enhancement techniques offered today are the various silver-retention processes designed to affect the contrast, color saturation, grain, and level of black density in print images. The use of silver-retention processes has gained great popularity among filmmakers worldwide over the last five years. In fact, scores of labs in both the United States and Europe have developed several competing methods to achieve the subtle — or sometimes pronounced — effect of retaining silver in the print, or, in some cases, in the intermediates or camera negative itself. However, even though each lab's methods may differ slightly, the end results of each technique are very similar.

Technicolor's ENR

One of the most popular of the silver-retention processes is ENR, which was named for its inventor, Ernesto Novelli Rimo, a former control department operator at Technicolor Rome who designed the technique for Vittorio Storaro, ASC, AIC to use on Warren Beatty's 1981 film *Reds*. The cameraman has

utilized the process on all of his subsequent films, including *Ladyhawke*, *Tucker*, *Dick Tracy*, *The Last Emperor*, *Little Buddha* and *Bulworth*. Additionally, cinematographers such as Janusz Kaminski, ASC (*Amistad* and *Saving Private Ryan*), Darius Khondji, ASC, AFC (*Evita*), Jack Green, ASC (*The Rookie*, *Bird*), Harris Savides (*The Game*), Chris Menges, BSC (*Michael Collins*) and Newton Thomas Sigel (*Fallen*) have each embraced the technique as a way of enhancing their visual palettes.

ENR is a proprietary color-positive developing technique which utilizes an additional black-and-white developing bath inserted at an appropriate stage of a print's processing in order to retain silver. After the film has been bleached, but prior to the silver being fixed out of the film, this extra bath allows for a controlled amount of silver to be redeveloped, adding density in the areas with the most exposure — primarily the blacks. Frank Ricotta, senior vice president of worldwide technical and engineering operations at Technicolor Hollywood, elaborates, "By retaining silver density in the image, you will increase the contrast by

making the blacks blacker, and, since you have increased contrast in the shadows, you can see more detail. The images will appear slightly sharper because of the increased contrast and, because there is silver in the film physically, it gives you a little bit of an edge-effect around the image. Finally, by virtue of having silver in the print, it will slightly desaturate the colors, depending upon the level of ENR used."

It is a common mistake to refer to all of the various silver-retention processes as bleach-bypassing. Although bypassing the bleaching step may yield a similar result to ENR, the two processes differ radically in their approach to silver retention. "Bleach-bypass will tend to create an effect similar to that achieved with ENR," Ricotta submits, "because when you develop the print stock, you haven't developed a lot of silver in the highlight areas where you didn't have a lot of exposure. But as you get into the shadows, where the majority of the exposure density is on the print, you start to develop a lot of silver and dye. So whether you do a bleach-bypass or ENR, when you leave silver in the film, it is retained with less silver in the highlights than in the shadows. The two processes are not too different in that regard.

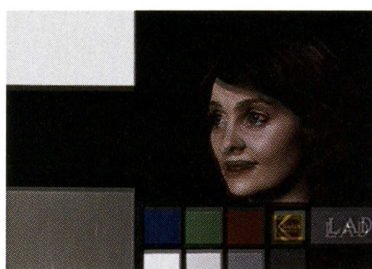
"However, we feel that ENR is much more finite a process because we can infinitely adjust the intensity of the effect by simply varying the concentration of the chemistry. Bleach-bypass means that you either bypass most or all of the bleaching function, so it's inherently less finite. This is an important factor for those films that want just a touch of ENR to make the blacks blacker. *Jade* is a perfect example of a film where William Friedkin and director of photography Andrzej Bartkowiak [ASC] wanted just a *little bit* of ENR to make the blacks nice and firm and rich, without measurably desaturating the colors.



"Conversely," Ricotta expands, "on a film like *Saving Private Ryan* [see AC August '98], Janusz Kaminski and Steven Spielberg were interested in a higher contrast and a very desaturated look, so we employed one of the highest levels of ENR used to date. That especially desaturated the faces, which was something that Janusz was very interested in doing."

Another frequent misconception that occurs in discussions about ENR is the assignment of "percentage" values as a way of labeling the nearly infinite doses of ENR available to filmmakers. In an effort to quantify — not to mention establish a method to control — the levels of ENR, Technicolor utilizes an infrared (IR) densitometer to measure the level of silver retained in a print. By targeting a specific IR reading for the filmmaker's desired effect, the laboratory can then set out to produce as many prints as required by the distributor with the exact level of ENR applied to each print.

"Many times, people are interested in knowing what 'percentage' of ENR was used on a film," Ricotta relates. "When we read a number off a densitometer — say '60 IR' [a .60 density at 1000nm] — people who are less familiar with this type of measurement may refer to that as '60 percent ENR.' Well, we haven't necessarily left 60 percent of the silver in the film. It is simply a reading of optical density in the infrared region of the electromagnetic spectrum. At Technicolor, when we show a customer an ENR print we say, 'This is a 40, this a 60, or this is an 80.' Then based on their reaction, we can determine whether they want a little more



or a little less effect. We never really talk in terms of what 'percentage' of silver is retained, because it is really immaterial to their decision. When we set an ENR value with the client, we then control to that densitometer value of .40, .60, .80 or whatever.

"It's like when people talk about a percentage of flashing," he elaborates. "A client may ask for a 10 percent flash. Well, what does that mean? In the lab, a 10 percent flash is the addition of a .10 density over a simple D-min [or clear reading] in each color. For instance, if you have a D-min reading of .06, .06, .12 [R-G-B], then a '10 percent flash' would result in subsequent readings of .16, .16, .22 respectively."

It should also be noted that since ENR is applied to the positive release print, the shortest increment of film that the process can be applied to is one lab reel. Although ENR is typically utilized on an entire picture, some films have employed the effect only on selected sequences to visually distinguish them from the rest of the movie.

Deluxe's CCE/ACE

Although mainstream audiences may not be consciously aware of the use of special processes when they watch a film in a theater, they certainly felt the effect while watching David Fincher's horrific thriller *Seven* (AC Oct. '95), which was photographed by Darius Khondji. A number of the film's release prints were treated with Deluxe's Color Contrast Enhancement (CCE) process to heighten the film's blacks and add a palpable texture and tonality.

Left: A normally processed LAD test showing even contrast in the flesh tones and accurate color reproduction. Right: The same LAD test with a 100 IR-level of Technicolor's ENR process applied. Note the increased contrast in the flesh tones and added density in the black and deep gray portions of the image. (Images courtesy of Technicolor.)

Soup du Jour



Top: A normally processed 5386 print. Deluxe utilizes this image to illustrate the effect of CCE and ACE processes. Center: The same image with 50 percent ACE applied yields blacker blacks but the overall color rendition is still true. Bottom: With CCE applied, the mid-tones have added density and the colors begin to slightly desaturate. (Images courtesy of Deluxe and Eastman Kodak Company.)

Designed by vice president of technical services Beverly Wood and executive vice president of engineering Colin Mossman, CCE is one of three silver-retention processes offered at Deluxe. Shortly after the release of *Seven*, the laboratory introduced its Adjustable Contrast

Enhancement (ACE) process, which shares many of the same features of CCE, but is also scalable, like its Technicolor cousin, ENR. "I can tell you that ENR and ACE are similar processes," Wood submits. "In fact, *Alien: Resurrection* [AC Nov. '97] had its dailies and answer print done by Technicolor, but the release prints were done by Deluxe because of a contractual situation with the studio. The director, Jean-Pierre Jeunet, compared our ACE check-print with his ENR answer print and was quite happy with the result. And with the recent advancements in both our chemical and mechanical technology, we were able to meet the film's large print demand on time.

"CCE, however, is something very different from ACE," she notes. "CCE is a proprietary process that produces a much higher contrast and adds more grain. When you have more silver, you have a more grainy look and blacker blacks. However, your blacks can also plug up more. With a bleach-bypass, the tones are much duller and more muted, and you have a lot less detail in the shadows. The blacks are very black, but the nuances in the gray are diminished. We do get some clients who want that look, but most of the time people say, 'I want the blacks to be black, but I still want some shadow detail.' This is why they are usually more interested in [silver-retention] processes such as CCE, ACE or ENR.

"These tools are nothing in hands of those who are not sure of what they're doing," she adds. "I've had a lot of people come in and consider using silver retention as an afterthought. They'll say, 'Take my negative and give me a CCE print because I want the look of *Seven*.' We will do the print for them of course, but when they say, 'It doesn't look the same!' it is because the look of a film is truly a collaborative effort between the director, the cinematographer, the gaffer, the production designer and the costumer. The choices that

are made in the art direction, the colors and the lighting really do make a difference. Now, I am by no means an expert on all of the things that the true experts do in order to create a certain look, but I know from working with cinematographers that it's important to shoot tests and actually go through the IP, IN and release-print stages to be sure about the look that they want."

Just as Technicolor controls their ENR process, Deluxe monitors the levels of silver retained by CCE and ACE at 1000nm. Wood notes that when Deluxe monitors the D-max reading on a normally processed 21-step wedge, the print yields an IR number between 58 and 60. "When you skip the bleach completely on a piece of print film and retain 100 percent of the silver in the film," she distinguishes, "that IR number goes up to 240 — effectively four times as much silver in the film than there should be.

"When you keep 100 percent of the silver in, the blacks look great in the dark parts of the room, but the faces now also have a lot of silver in them as well, so their contrast is all messed up. The fleshtones may look old and hard; therefore, you may say, 'Can I back off on the amount silver in my print and still keep some of the normal nuances of the curve?' What this basically means is that you should try to make only the top part of the curve increase, while you keep the toe area the same. To do that, we back off from skip bleach and go to CCE. When we set up our proprietary set of events in terms of printing and processing, we end up with a D-max IR reading of 180 to 190. We now have about 75 percent silver in the print. What you will then see on the screen is that you now have some nice desaturation in the color; there's still a little bit of grittiness and grain to it, but you'll have more detail in the blacks than if you just skipped the bleach. For a movie like *Seven*, where the lighting was predomi-

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nately on the upper part of the curve because the whole movie was so dark, going with CCE was one of the reasons that film looked so good.

"[Director] John Frankheimer fell in love with the CCE process with the few prints we did for him on *George Wallace*," she adds. "Now, he just released *Ronin* with a select number of CCE show prints, while the majority of the release had normal prints. But since Robert Fraisse [AFC] did a fantastic job on the photography, providing a solid, rich negative, you may not notice the difference unless you distinctly know the look of CCE and compare the two types of prints side by side."

Finally, in the hierarchy of silver-retention techniques available at Deluxe, the lab offers its ACE process. "When we're presented with films like *Alien: Resurrection* or *The X-Files* — where the filmmakers want deep blacks, but still want the colors to look true and have a good level of chroma and texture in the mid-scale regions — we'll back off from CCE and give them ACE," Wood explains. "With ACE, we can give them 30, 40 or 60 percent, or whatever level they want. We can make those specific nuances by making chemical changes in the process. We did about 3,000 prints for both *Alien: Resurrection* and *The X-Files*, and both were released with about a 50 percent level of ACE."

LTC's NEC

On the opposite side of the Atlantic, Paris-based LTC Laboratories offers a unique twist to the black-and-white additive system of silver retention. Their process, which is called NEC — *noir en couleur*, the French phrase for "black in color" — allows filmmakers to perform the silver-retention function on the interpositive and have the effect match the look of a print that was processed directly. This somewhat baffling feat is, of course, of utmost interest to distributors — who would

like to avoid the additional costs incurred while performing a special process on each release print — and cinematographers, who desire consistency in the presentation of their work regardless of the region or country the film is distributed.

Designed by Jean-Pierre Poggi with the aid of color-timing consultants Yvan Lucas and Georges Roch, NEC was created for Darius Khondji to use on the 1995 film *The City of Lost Children*. Since the highly-regarded release of that film, the Parisian laboratory has utilized its proprietary technique on such films as Mathieu Kassovitz's *Assassins, Un Frère* (directed by Sylvie Verheyde and photographed by Antoine Roch) and *K* (directed by Alexandre Arcady and photographed by Gerry Fisher, BSC).

"We do the NEC treatment on the interpositive, and yet the results will be identical as if we do the treatment directly on the positive [print]," Poggi attests. "We will have a higher density on the interpositive, but since we're using normal processing on the print, the density will be the same [D-max] that the film is capable of. However, we have already created the look on the interpositive, so we don't need a special treatment for the print. The NEC process is less about blacker blacks [than about] affecting the contrast and [tonal reproduction] in the image."

BLEACH-BYPASS

The procedure of bleach bypass entails either the partial or complete skipping of the bleaching function during the processing of a film. Roger Deakins, ASC, BSC utilized this technique to stunning effect on 1984 — which was processed at Britain's Kays Laboratory — while Denis Lenoir, AFC incorporated bleach bypass on *Désordre* (1986) and *Monsieur Hire* (1989) at France's renown Eclair Labs (see Benjamin Bergery's coverage in AC March and May '93),

which also applied the technique on the 1991 release of *Delicatessen* for Darius Khondji.

While the majority of laboratories in Hollywood are capable of offering bleach-bypassing to their clients, both Fotokem and CFI have introduced some custom modifications to the technique. Fotokem offers bleach-bypassing not only on prints, but also on original camera negative as well as intermediate films. CFI's bleach-bypassing system, dubbed Silver Tint, may also be utilized at a specific stage and is offered in two different levels: Standard Silver Tint and Enhanced Silver Tint.

CFI's Silver Tint

Richard Smith, technical director at CFI, explains, "Both CFI and Fotokem have what you would call an 'alternative ENR process.' Because of the constraints of our existing processing tank setup, we are unable to put a true ENR tank inline. We would do that if we had the tank availability, but [as it stands] we'd have to reconfigure the entire processor. In normal processing, the film travels through the prebath, color developer, stop, first fix, bleach, soundtrack application, wash, second fix, wash, stabilizer and then to the dry-box. In an ENR-type resilvering process, the black-and-white developer is introduced after the sound application [or after the bleach] and before the second fix.

"To differentiate the two, with the Enhanced process, we leave 100 percent of the silver in the print, resulting in an IR reading near 240. But with Standard Silver Tint, we can remove a portion of the silver, yielding an IR value between 165 and 175. Standard Silver Tint has higher contrast, blacker blacks and desaturated colors compared to a normal print, but not to the same degree as the Enhanced Silver Tint."

CFI first utilized Enhanced Silver Tint for the Robert Altman

film *Kansas City* (see AC Sept. '96), which was shot by Oliver Stapleton. "This process produces a very harsh, high-contrast, hard look," Smith describes. "The contrast of the print film increases dramatically and it significantly desaturates colors. Robert Altman wanted a harsh look for *Kansas City*. He wanted bland, muted fleshtones and heightened contrast, so he elected to use the Enhanced Silver Tint on approximately 50 of the film's show prints."

The lab incorporated Standard Silver Tint on such films as *She's So Lovely* (photographed by Thierry Arbogast, AFC) and *Joyride* (Stephen Douglas Smith), as well as more recently on the Brazilian feature *Un Embruyo* (Marcello Durst). "For *She's So Lovely*, Thierry wanted CFI to emulate the NEC process done in France by LTC. For a period of time we tried experimenting with flashing and special developing on the interpositive to achieve similar results, but ultimately we released the film with Standard Silver Tint prints."

Fotokem's Skip-Bleach

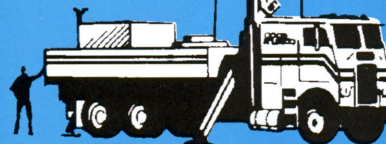
"On any developing machine that has a bleach tank, the bleach can be bypassed," suggests Mark Van Horne, manager of production services at Fotokem. "However, bypassing the bleach has a different effect at each step that you do it. Fortunately, since bleach-bypass is basically incomplete processing, it is a reversible process. If you decide at a later date that you don't like the look of your bypassed negative, you could always go back and just put it through the bleach and the fixer to turn it back into a normal negative."

Van Horne cautions that if you intend to bypass the bleach of your original camera negative, you should perform exposure tests to safeguard the photography from the possibility that it might later be processed normally. "When bypassing the bleach on your negative, we recommend that you actually underexpose,

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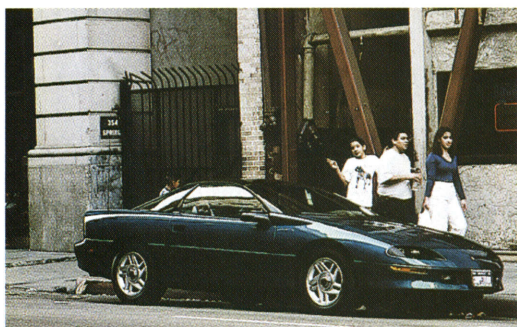
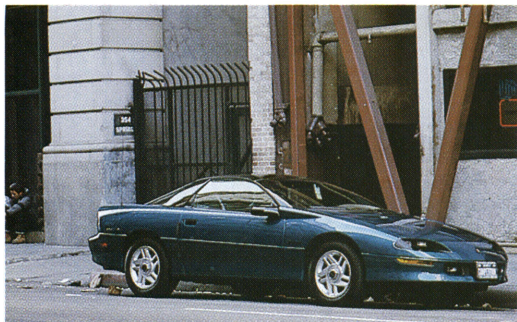
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From top: Normal print, bleach-bypass print, and bleach-bypass negative, as processed by Fotokem. (Images courtesy of Fotokem.)

which is a scary idea because in all other instances we would never recommend that," he explains. "But when you bypass the bleach and leave that silver on the negative, the added density basically acts like added exposure, and makes the whites much whiter. [Doing the skip-bleach processes on the print, as opposed to the negative or intermediates] obviously creates a very different look. ENR or skip-bleach on the print is a more subtle look that we tend to see more in features, while the individuals who skip the bleach on the negative tend to be working on music videos or commercials where they want to create a look that gets your attention.

It's a much more pronounced effect." Additionally, he reveals that Fotokem will be offering a scalable black-and-white additive bath — like ENR or ACE — by the end of this year.

Van Horne also points out that due to the additional setup costs required to incorporate silver-retention processes, when utilizing special process on a film, it may be too expensive to perform the required testing, so Fotokem has therefore created a detailed photographic demonstration which they screen every Wednesday at 10:30 a.m. "We currently show footage with skip-bleach on the negative, the interpositive, the internegative and the print, as well as skip bleach on the interpositive and internegative with flashing. We tried flashing — from 5 percent to 30 percent — to get the look of the skip-bleach print, but do it on the intermediate."

The advantage of utilizing the process at the interneg stage is dramatic in terms of expense. "Ordinarily, the lab reclaims the silver from the prints and sells it, [which offsets operating costs,]" Van Horne describes. "But when you leave the silver in the prints, the lab charges a few cents per foot of film for the lost silver reclamation. If you're making 2,000 10,000' prints, that's going to be a big expense for the distributor. If you can build that look into the interpositive/internegative, then you won't have to pay anything extra for all of those prints."

CROSS-PROCESSING

Another technique that filmmakers have occasionally asked the lab to perform in order to radically alter the look of a picture is cross-processing reversal film. This method has recently been utilized by such cinematographers as Robert Richardson, ASC (on Oliver Stone's *U-Turn*, see AC Oct. '97), Elliot Davis (on Steven Soderbergh's *The Underneath*, and for portions of Spike Lee's *Get on the Bus*, see AC Nov. '96),

Malik Sayeed (also for Lee on *Clockers*, see AC Sept. '95), Lance Acord (on Vincent Gallo's *Buffalo 66*, see AC July '98) and Newton Thomas Sigel (for the "Demon-Vision" sequences in *Fallen*).

The use of cross-processed film has become something of a taboo subject matter for laboratories, film manufacturers and distributors. In fact, very few labs even offer the service due to the inherent conflict of interest the technique represents. Duart in New York is one of the few labs currently servicing cross-processing clients, and dailies manager Al Pierce states, "Cross-processing in the motion picture lab is when an exposed image shot on Ektachrome reversal film is developed through a color negative process. While Ektachrome was not manufactured to be processed as a negative film, this technique will allow you to obtain a negative image on a clear-based original reversal film. The effect on the screen, either by a workprint or video transfer, is usually a higher-contrast and increased-grain image. We've found that a normal to slightly underexposed image gives the best results for lab timing and printing equipment; too much exposure will not allow for the use of an orange-based filter in the timing and printing of the negative. Use of this filter will help match the cross-processed film with the color negative film, and thus enable the lab to better time and correct the images."

The effect of cross-processing on the image varies greatly, with even the most minute changes of the nearly infinite factors affecting the exposure, handling, processing and storage of the film. "A serious problem associated with such cross-processing is the need to use formaldehyde, or a formaldehyde derivative, to stabilize the film's magenta dye," states Frank Ricotta of Technicolor. He adds that "such chemicals carry with them significant ecological and health concerns

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The three Technicolor black-and-white Y-C-M color-separation matrices — printed individually here for illustration purposes — that were utilized to print the final composite image at right. (Images courtesy of Technicolor.)

that may preclude their use. If you don't stabilize the film and just protect the image with an interpositive, the magenta dye in the camera original is going to fade fairly quickly. Since Technicolor will not use the noted stabilizers, the lab's policy is not to accept film for cross-process-

ing since it will not have a stable image. However, if someone chooses to use cross-processing for a commercial or a music video, they're probably going to take that negative and go straight to transfer, so maybe the long-term stability of the negative is not a concern for them."

this processing procedure."

Despite all of these logistical headaches, the resulting imagery can be stunning. Depending on all of the aforementioned variables, the effect on the footage can range from a subtle increase in contrast and grain, to a truly bizarre skewing of tonality



Some labs have concerns about the chemicals that could be released into their processors' tanks by cross-processing reversal stocks, but this has not been a problem at Duart. "We have not had any problems in processing Ektachrome in our color negative bath while using the existing chemistry," Pierce submits. "However, there are important environmental concerns connected with some chemicals used in the stabilizing process of Ektachrome film. We have found a suitable substitute which has been shown to considerably slow down the fading problem associated with this film when cross-processed. However, there still is no total guarantee for the long-term stability of this product after it is cross-processed. Also, it is my understanding that Kodak will not guarantee the stability of Ektachrome when used in

throughout the picture, particularly in the highlights and shadows, which can radically shift to magenta and cyan respectively.

Given the associated risks of cross-processing, French cinematographer Denis Lenoir, AFC has utilized a lesser-known laboratory printing technique to achieve similar results. Developed by fellow countryman Éric Gautier, AFC (*Personne ne m'aime* and *Love, ect.*), the technique entails printing a normally-shot camera negative onto standard print film as an interpositive. Print film is a much higher-contrast stock, and Lenoir notes that when this IP is subsequently printed onto a 5244 internegative, the resulting imagery will be much more contrasty, with amplified grain and skewed colors.

"We know effects in grain and deepened blacks can be achieved by other processes like bleach-bypass

and ENR," says Lenoir, "but those techniques mute colors. This technique yields colors that are quite strong and shifted in the highlights and shadows."

STRIPPING THE ANTI-HALATION BACKING

An even more exotic lab technique, which is nonetheless noteworthy, is one in which the anti-halation backing is stripped off an original camera negative prior to photography. This method has only been used once in recent history on a major motion picture, for a small flashback sequence in the film *Virtuosity*, which was photographed by Gale Tattersall (see AC Oct. '95). Tattersall had Vancouver-based Gastown Labs remove the anti-halation backing by running the his raw stock through their processor's first bath, bypassing the rest of the developing steps, and going directly into a completely blacked-out drying box. The unexposed negative was then recanned and shipped back to the production for photography.

The removal of the anti-halation backing allows light passing through the negative during photography to bounce off the rear pressure plate — which Tattersall replaced in his camera with a custom mirror-surfaced plate — and cause halation on the film around the highlights. Tattersall likened the effect to the look of old turn-of-the-century photographs. Interestingly, David Watkin, BSC wanted to use this process on the period film *Yentl*, but it was deemed too risky.

REBIRTH OF DYE TRANSFER

Another potentially exciting development in printing technology is the attempted resurrection of Technicolor's dye-transfer printing technique. First utilized with three-strip black-and-white camera negatives, and later adopted for single-strip color negative films, the process

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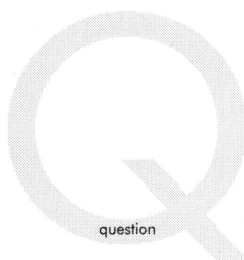
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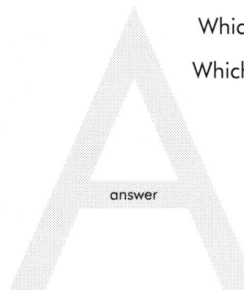
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hasn't been used in Hollywood since the 1974 release of *The Godfather Part II*.

With all of the recent advancements in film technology, Technicolor's new focus on the dye-transfer process is intended to improve the revered old system. Some industry experts have adopted a "wait-and-see" attitude toward the firm's goal, but Technicolor's experts remain optimistic. "What we point out to our customers is that dye transfer will give you blacker blacks than standard color positive print film, with more detail and higher color saturation," explains Frank Ricotta. "Additionally, one of the major advantages of dye-transfer printing is that we can alter the contrast of the printing elements that we make. From the original negative, we manufacture printing elements called matrices, which are the complimentary [Y-C-M] records of

the blue, red and green imagery recorded on the original negative. If you have an original negative that was shot normally, but want a bit more or less contrast, you can now adjust those levels in the print by utilizing dye-transfer printing."

One boon to Technicolor's efforts is the staggering progress made by Kodak in emulsion technology. "Kodak has essentially made four new stocks for us," Ricotta says. "There are the three different black-and-white matrix stocks for the red, green and blue separations, and then what we call a receiver stock. In the dye-transfer process, we start with the original color negative and then, on an optical printer, separate the red, green and blue information onto these first three stocks, which make up your complimentary color matrices. Then, by virtue of the way you print and develop these matrices, in addition to having a silver image,

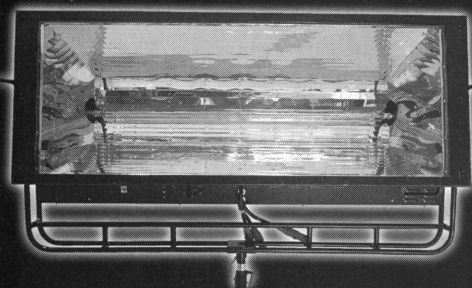
they have a relief image on them.

"Dye transfer is very much like an offset printing process that has a drum with raised and lowered lettering on it," he continues. "In offset printing, you flood that drum with ink and then print that ink onto a piece of paper. By doing four passes — with cyan, magenta, yellow and black ink — you create a color image. Dye-transfer printing isn't all that different. When the matrices come off the developing machine, they also have a relief image like a printing plate. When these matrices are then loaded on the dye-transfer machine, the three separate records are, in turn, saturated with the appropriate dyes and then sequentially put into contact with a receiver film, onto which the dyes are transferred. Of course, the three dye images must be transferred in perfect registration with one another to avoid color fringing in the print."

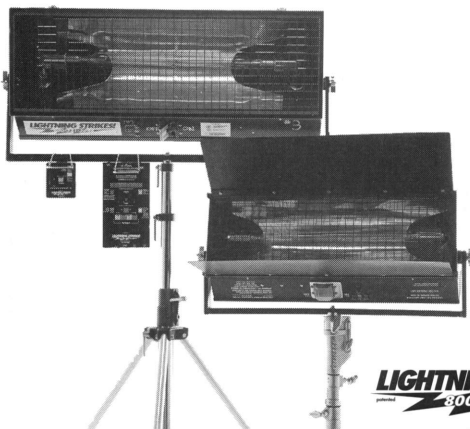
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An added benefit from printing each color layer separately is the ability to individually select the quality of each dye used. "The dyes in a standard color print film are actually manufactured in the positive film as a result of chemical reactions," Ricotta details. "Those dyes *are* very good, but they restrict your freedom in terms of what dyes you are going to use because they are formed by the chemicals that are already in the film. With the dye-transfer process, you select the dyes that you want based on their actual color rendition.

"Color positive prints will never look exactly like dye-transfer prints," notes Ricotta. "While we believe the overall quality of dye-transfer prints to be superior, we recognize that the 'dye-transfer look' may not be proper for every picture. In that regard, it may be considered yet another option in the arsenal of the creative community."

SOME TIME-TESTED ALTERNATIVES

All of the special processes detailed here also come with additional charges to the filmmakers, so it should be noted that there still are some inexpensive alternatives, several of which can be performed in-camera.

A less extreme way to manipulate contrast may be achieved not only through lighting and exposure, but also by means of pushing and pulling the film (usually up to two stops with no deleterious effects on grain), which can subtly change the film's contrast response and color saturation. Pulling the film — overexposing (by underrating the film's ASA) and then underdeveloping the negative — will slightly decrease the contrast and color saturation. Pushing the film — underexposing (rating the film faster) and then increasing the developing time —

produces the opposite effect, yielding a slightly more contrasty image with a subtle increase in color saturation.

The process of flashing the camera negative — through the use of devices like the Panaflasher or Varicon (see *AC* July '90), or by flashing in the lab — can be used to both decrease contrast and desaturate colors. However, it should also be noted that both pulling and flashing are often used in tandem with the utilization of a silver-retention process to further control the behavior of the effect; usually to soften the contrast of the mid-scale fleshtones.

And finally, there is also the long-used color desaturation technique which involves striking both color and black-and-white interpositives of the color footage. These are then A/B-printed onto the same print in varying degrees to mute the colors. ■

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Short Takes



Un Chien Esthero
by Stephanie Argy

Each year, MTV designates a handful of "Breakthrough Videos," singling them out for technical or visual innovations. Recently honored in this category was Esthero's "Heaven Sent," helmed by Phil Harder and photographed by Chris Soos, a longstanding collaborator of director Floria Sigismundi (see *AC* Aug. '98). The video for this Canadian act features drawings by comic book artist Jon J. Muth, which serve as the backgrounds for high-contrast live-action elements. Blended together in Flame, Hal, Henry and Paintbox, the different layers take on a new look that the director and cinematographer hoped would be reminiscent of old-fashioned footage. Remarks Soos, "We were mimicking [Luis Buñuel's] *Un Chien Andalou*."

To accommodate the postproduction processes, and to achieve a high-contrast portraiture, Soos had to sculpt his images to be as flat and 2-D as possible. "It's like every cinematographer's nightmare," he says. "It's a worst-case scenario to be asked to light something as flat as possible with no dimension."

"I think he was intrigued by the limitations," notes director Harder, also a cinematographer who recently shot *Snow*, a feature entry in the recent Toronto International Film Festival.

Prior to "Heaven Sent," Harder and Soos had never worked together, but the director was impressed with the cameraman's reel. "You could tell he was going out on a limb with his cinematography and really pushing it," recalls Harder.

Soos became accustomed to experimenting while shooting music videos after his graduation from Toronto's Ryerson Polytechnic Institute in 1993. "I pretty much jumped straight into shooting," he recalls. While Soos respects the discipline of those who spend years working their way up through the camera department, he didn't want to wait a decade or more before he could create his own imagery. "You lose the spirit of filmmaking while you're in your twenties," he says. "You have to draw from that energy, and the film community has to understand that."

He opines that younger filmmakers have been shaped by modern technology's ability to allow for instant viewing of one's work. "I'm a huge fan of what computers can do these days. I don't feel the machine anymore — it's instantaneous," says Soos, whose home contains a digital darkroom devised around Adobe Photoshop. "But one can't

be a slave to the equipment. The technology is not that important, because it's changing all the time. What's important is the ability to adapt. When the Arriflex was invented, it was revolutionary. It was a studio camera you could hold on your shoulder, and it inspired neorealism and the French New Wave."

In the case of the Esthero video, director Harder wanted to utilize novel technology to re-create the ambiance of old-style optical printing. He told the artists that they could use any and all tricks and toys, as long as the video appeared as if were made prior to 1962.

The live-action part of the video was shot over two days on a Toronto soundstage. The backdrop was a white cyclorama that formed a virtual environment against which the performers could be photographed. Also on stage were the few bits of set dressing that the

Photos courtesy of Harder-Fuller Films, Inc., now with A Band Apart Music Videos.



performers had to touch — a door, a window and some curtains, all of which were colored black so they would show up better in the CG environment. "It looked really cheesy while we were doing it, like an early-Eighties video," cracks Harder.

Soos created the flat lighting with an overhead 40' x 40' silk, lit with DeSisti 2.5/4K HMI Goya lights. "Those units are traditionally used for lighting large areas of cycs, because they have an extremely broad, even spread," he says. "Most

A painterly quality was laid over the surreal images in "Heaven Sent" — mimicking the feel of "optical printer" effects with high-end digital post techniques.

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A cloud slices the moon in an image directly inspired by Buñuel's surrealist short *Un Chien Andalou*.



cinematographers would use Skypans or cyc strips, but Goyas are just fantastic for lighting broad areas of cycs very evenly, and they're very light."

Harder's insistence on a very high-contrast image made the job much riskier for Soos. "I knew with preliminary color correction [in telecine] and secondary color correction [in Flame and other image-manipulation programs], we would be able to achieve a high-contrast look with no problems. But in high contrast, it's about playing the edge."

From the record company's perspective, the danger was that certain

details might get lost, especially in the face of singer Esthero. To protect themselves, Harder and Soos did a lot of preliminary tests to determine the range of subtleties. In high-contrast work, gray shadings are scarce, so anything in shadow can easily be enveloped in black. Makeup also has to be handled very carefully. "If we'd used too much rouge on Esthero's cheeks, it would have looked as if she had bruises," says Harder. "It was the same thing with the lighting — we had to use a mixture of flat lighting and front lighting, which looks horrible to your eye."

To ensure the proper look, Soos took video-assist technology a step further. He ran the video from the tap into a recorder, then trained an operator to dial in a high-contrast version of the image on a monitor. "Instead of playing this spot-meter guessing game and having a just-trust-me attitude with the director, I could dial in the look on set and know exactly what we were shooting."

"Let's leave the mystery of cinematography to another generation," he adds. "The less guessing you do, the better, because everyone on set is suddenly more at ease. The director didn't question me for a second."

Making the live-action images fit with the background plates was the most trying task. To facilitate the process for digital artists working with the footage in post, Soos and Harder gave them two ways to orient themselves geographically. "Before each shot," says Harder, "we would lay down a wireframe to simulate what would be the corner of the room. It was like three

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pieces of wood — two that sat on the floor and one that went up, all painted black so that we could see them." The duo then shot a piece of showcard with a grid pattern drawn on it. "The lines of the grid indicated the vanishing points very distinctly," says Soos.

To simplify the post process even more, Harder opted for a static camera throughout the shoot; all movement was created within frame. "With a music video, you'd think that would be the anti-thing to do," he admits. But not moving the camera also had a certain aesthetic appeal. Too often in music videos, he observes, directors try to create onscreen energy with so much rapid camera movement that the subject matter becomes overpowered. "You don't get any energy, you just get redundancy," he says.

Soos shot the video with his favorite non-sync camera, the Arriflex 435. "It's so versatile," he says. With a frame rate that ranges from 1-150 fps, "it's like an intervalometer on one end, and a high-speed Photosonics on the

other, lightly brushing both ends of the spectrum." To help simulate the feeling of old footage, he shot some of the video at 16 fps and the rest around 24 fps.

Even though the footage ultimately appeared in black-and-white, Soos chose to use Kodak's Vision 500T 5279 stock. "It's the most friendly stock for studio lighting because of its speed," says Soos. "I just love the contrast characteristics, which makes it easier to play with in telecine." He used very little filtration, other than occasional softening

with his instruments of choice — a Fogal stocking or a Tiffen Soft/FX filter.

On the surface, "Heaven Sent" differed from the cinematographer's usual approach, but the work remained fundamentally the same. "My job is to serve the director," Soos maintains. "That's the rule of cinematography that will never change, whether you like it or not. Every previous philosophical approach means nothing, unless I can serve the director and do exactly what he or she wants." ■

1998 MTV Music Video Awards

The 15th annual MTV Video Music Awards aired live on the cable network from Los Angeles' Universal Amphitheater on September 10. Here are some of the winners of the "Moonman" trophies bestowed at the ceremony.

Best Cinematography: Harris Savides, ("Criminal," Fiona Apple).

Best Direction: Jonas Akerlund ("Ray of Light," Madonna)

Best Editing: Jonas Akerlund ("Ray of Light," Madonna)

Best Art Direction: Donovan Davidson ("Bachelorette," Björk).

Best Visual Effects: Steve Murgatroyd, Dan Williams,
Steve Hiam, Anthony Walsham ("Frozen," Madonna)

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New Products

compiled by **Andrew O. Thompson**

Kodak's Expanding "Vision"

by Christopher Probst

On September 16, Eastman Kodak unveiled the three latest additions to their Vision family of film stocks. Hosting a presentation for cinematographers, lab technicians and other industry professionals at the Director's Guild theater in Hollywood, the company demonstrated its new generation of color print films, Vision 2383 and Vision Premier 2393, and a new color negative emulsion, Vision 800T 5289. Two 35mm demonstration films — shot by Kodak's in-house cinematographers — featured side-by-side projected comparisons between each of the new stocks and their current Kodak counterparts.

Additionally, Kodak president of motion picture imaging Richard Aschman announced the inception of Kodak's ScreenCheck program, a technical quality-assurance initiative designed to certify theaters which meet Kodak's recommended projection and sound reproduction standards.

Vision and Vision Premier Color Print Films

Field-tested under the code names "Clipper One" and "Clipper Two," the new Vision print films are the result of an extensive international marketing survey and advancements in the science of emulsion design and manufacturing technology. "We talked to over a hundred people, including cinematographers, laboratories, distributors and other creative individuals in the industry, to determine what they'd like in a print

film," says David Niklewicz, project manager for the Vision print films. "From those interviews, one of the major aspects that people stated they were looking for was blacker blacks than are currently available through a normally processed 5386 print. Additionally, we also found that there was sort of a bimodal distribution in people's preferences for color saturation. A large group of people liked the color reproduction and saturation that is now available in current the Kodak print stock, but there

were also a significant number of people who stated that they would really love a little more pizzazz in the colors and more punch. Based on this information, we designed the Vision and Vision Premier."

Vision 2383 is designed to eventually replace the current 5386 standard print film (2386 with a polyester Estar base). The film will accurately reproduce the entire range and subtlety of tones and colors that cinematographers are capable of recording in the new generation of Kodak Vision color negative films, and will also generate slightly denser blacks and brighter, neutral highlights.

Vision Premier 2393 is designed to take these improvements one step further, offering even deeper and richer black tones, brighter highlights, and greater color saturation.

"For both of the new Vision print films, we have put together an entirely new chemistry package in terms of all-new emulsions," Niklewicz explains. "Two of the three couplers have a new chemistry makeup, and we have changed one of the formulations for the magenta to make it even more reactive and efficient. We have also built in a

Side-by-side comparisons of Kodak's color print films. The first image shows the current standard 5386 stock, followed by Vision 2383 and Vision Premier 2393. Note the increased densities of the Vision and Vision Premier, while the Premier also exhibits a slight increase in color saturation. (Clips courtesy of Deluxe.)



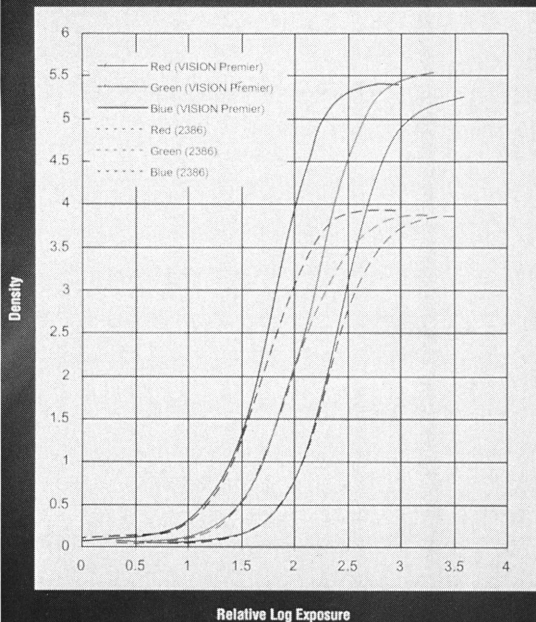
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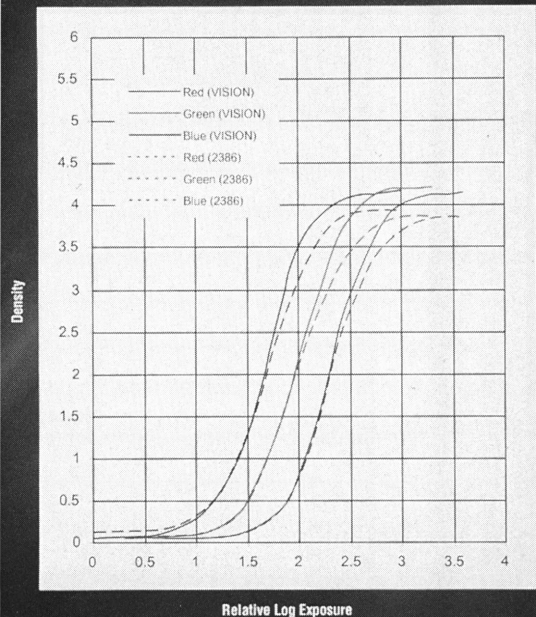


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Characteristic Curve VISION Premier Color Print Film vs 2386



Characteristic Curve VISION Color Print Film vs 2386



Top: Characteristic sensitometric curves for Vision 2383 versus its predecessor 2386, clearly displaying the extended density range. **Bottom:** Vision Premier 2393 versus 2386 even further exemplifies the added level of blacks.

much higher potential dye density, so that you can have much blacker blacks than you could with 5386 print stock. With normal film processing all of the silver is removed, but the enhanced color and density comes from the improvements in the dye chemistry and emulsion. Depending upon how various labs process the film, the curve pretty much matches the current product up to a 2.0 or 2.5 density, but then the Vision stock will continue to go higher in the density range. Vision print film has a D-max around 3.8 to 4.0, while the Vision Premier is designed to achieve a D-max over 5.0.

"If the creative people involved with a film want to have a softer contrast," he adds, "there are several ways that you can drop the densities. But if that [density] capability is not already inherent in the film, you can't raise the density without doing some sort of special lab process." (See the article "Soup du Jour" on page 82.)

Rob Hummel, president of technology at DreamWorks SKG, which will utilize Vision 2383 print film for their animated feature *The Prince of Egypt*, states, "The advantage of the new Kodak Vision print films is that the color values remain the same while we're getting a saturated black the likes of which hasn't been seen for decades — it's a dynamic difference. The increased density of the blacks gives the image an extra snap in contrast, which in turn gives you the appearance of a sharper image. Black is such an important part of the palette. In any scene, you're going to have parts of the frame that are overexposed — the highlights — and parts of the frame that are underexposed — the shadows. Cinematographers are going to see more detail in their underexposed areas of the frame. Instead of some very faint highlights in a milky shadow area, there will be more separation and clarity with the improved blacks. The choice of print film is now truly a creative decision. You can decide which comes closest to matching the original creative vision of the story. With the Vision Premier film you can see reds that just suddenly pop. All of the

primary colors get that extra bit of saturation. This allows filmmakers to go in a direction that has more saturated colors. To me, what the introduction of these two print prints has done is to expand the palette; you now have a choice. If you're at all visually conscious of the images on the screen, you will notice the difference. It definitely raises the bar in the quality of film presentation."

Besides the image-structure improvements built into the new films by the incorporation of the "Vision" emulsion and coupler technologies, both film stocks feature a new type of polyester base which is markedly more durable and also eliminates the use of a remjet backing. This new base incorporates an anti-static layer that reduces damage to unprocessed film caused by static — a deleterious effect that also attracts dust particles — and utilizes a patented anti-halation dye technology that eliminates color fringing during the optical printing of titles.

Director of photography Russell Carpenter, ASC recently utilized the Vision Premier stock for the release of *The Negotiator*. He notes, "I was in the midst of the timing and release printing for *The Negotiator*, which was shot in Super 35, and I felt the prints needed more snap and richer blacks. The Vision Premier brought the blacks back and then some! In fact, there were two shots in the film that were slightly underexposed and [I knew that with a normal print] the blacks weren't going to be what they should be. However, the Premier stock brought those shots totally into line with the rest of the picture, which was amazing. I even had detail in the blacks! I was really quite happy with the results. For my money, *The Negotiator* had the best Super 35 print that I've ever seen.

"If I were shooting a film knowing that I was going to be printing on the Premier stock," Carpenter continues, "I don't think I would alter my shooting style, but I do know that if I were shooting in low-light situations where I had any question about whether the blacks were going to be rich enough, or whether I might have an underexposed shot, I

would know that the Premier stock would bring that right back."

Similarly, Stephen Burum, ASC utilized the Vision Premier on his most recent work with Brian De Palma, *Snake Eyes* (see AC Aug. '98). "We made 11 show prints for *Snake Eyes* using Vision Premier, and they were fabulous," states Burum. "I specifically wanted to build more contrast into the prints. I've always liked really hard contrast and deep blacks. Any image looks better if you have black-and-white references in the frame. [Having a choice in print films] allows us to customize contrast like they do in black-and-white films. It is also comparable to turning the knob on the telecine to get more contrast during a transfer session. These stocks give cinematographers more control over the look projected on the screen."

"Both Vision and Vision Premier are just extraordinary," states Beverly Wood, vice president of technical services at Deluxe Laboratories, which recently released *Great Expectations* (photographed by Emmanuel Lubezki, ASC) on Vision Premier. "I've never seen a film like Vision Premier before where you can print three to four points lighter and not lose the blacks. There are a lot Oscar-winning cameramen who shoot commercials in between features and after working in the world of video, where you can tweak a knob and get some different contrast, they come back to working in film and want to have that same ability. Now, we know that you can't just twist a knob with film, but you can offer some different looks. This is an exciting time in our industry, because with the Vision and Vision Premier films, we now have a choice in looks with the print stock and can achieve richer, blacker blacks. Of course, we still have the various silver-retention processes available to make everyone else happy."

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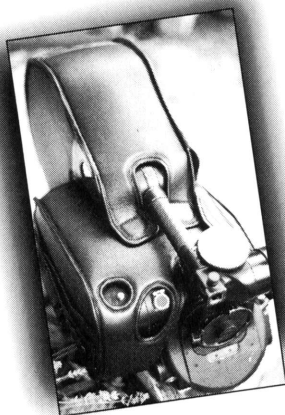
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tive films, Kodak announced the creation of Vision 800T 5289, the "fastest color negative film ever made available to cinematographers." The high-speed, tungsten-balanced film is based on the same Vision family tonal and color reproduction characteristics, but with additional improvements in emulsion design and crystal sensitivity, the film achieves a true 800-speed exposure index.

"Vision 800T incorporates seven new silver halide emulsions, which improve light-gathering efficiency and allow for the capture of more shadow details in low-light situations," says technical associate Michael Ryan of the Origination Film Technology division at Kodak. "In the early 1990s, we introduced T-grain technology with the EXR films, which dramatically reduced grain while increasing sharpness. Since then, we've learned how to work more efficiently with tabular grains and coupler chemistry components to build color film layers. We've optimized the size and thickness of the grains and have developed some new chemical addenda that allow us to more efficiently process photons to get more [exposure] speed."

These advanced emulsion-building techniques have been successfully applied to four previous Vision color negative films: 200T 5274, 250D 5246, 320T 5277, and 500T 5279. "The basic premise behind the design of the Vision family of films was to improve the image structure performance — lowering the apparent granularity and increasing the sharpness, while keeping the reproduction of tone and color the same," Ryan maintains. "With the Vision family of films, we started to triple-coat the magenta layer — whereas all previous emulsions consisted of dual layers featuring a fast and a slow component — which allowed us to make certain design changes in the emulsion that greatly reduced the film's granularity while improving the overall sharpness.

"Vision 800T is a continuation of the same tonal and color reproduction aspects of the current Vision stocks, but the new film takes advantage of further improvements in the emulsion design by

adding a third yellow layer. Because the film is tungsten-balanced, the yellow [blue-sensitive] layer is the most challenging layer to increase in sensitivity, and therefore ends up being the grainiest. In Vision 500T, there *are* tabular grains in the slow component of the dual yellow layer, but not in the fast component, which utilizes a 3-D emulsion. With Vision 800T, we still don't have tabular grains in the fast layer, but since we now triple-coat the yellow layer, we have tabular grains in the slow *and* middle-speed portions, and utilize some of the proprietary chemical addenda that we have previously incorporated on the Vision films in the other layers.

"However, even though the addition of the third yellow layer allowed us to keep the granularity closer to Vision 500T's level," Ryan continues, "with Vision 800T's faster speed, the other two layers — the cyan and magenta — are still at a slight disadvantage compared to 500T. Vision 500T was able to keep the same speed of its predecessor, EXR 5298, but utilized the improvements in imaging efficiency for reduced grain and added sharpness. Vision 800T, however, uses this improved emulsion efficiency for added speed. We kept the image structure the same as the 5298, but we increased the speed of the film by two-thirds of a stop. So from a granularity perspective, 800T is more on par with 5298."

What this increased light efficiency and speed means for cinematographers is added flexibility and a two-thirds of a stop cushion to fall back upon when under the gun. "Two-thirds of a stop may seem like a small advantage," says Aschman, "but it can give you a decisive creative edge when you are working on the edge of darkness at magic hour, underwater or in any number of other situations."

Director of photography Lloyd Ahern, ASC was able to test Vision 800T during the filming of director Walter Hill's upcoming sci-fi feature *Supernova*. "We shot one test on a stage that was part of a futuristic set," Ahern submits. "We were shooting through several layers of a

curved Plexiglas wall that were about 20 feet apart, and light was bouncing all over the place. I had a 400mm lens on the B-camera and shot the scene with the two older 500-speed films — EXR 5298 and Vision 500T — and Vision 800T. The images recorded with the Vision 800T are sharper and snappier, the blacks are blacker and you can see more details. The most impressive aspect of this test is that you can feel the energy [of the shot] as the film cuts through the layers of Plexiglas and comes in on the face of our lead actress, Angela Bassett. There is an added dimension that helps to make her connect with the audience.

"[Based on that experience,] I'd choose Vision 800T for many situations," states the cinematographer. "I'd use it if I had an action sequence where there were 20 footcandles of keylight and we were shooting slow-motion at 48 and 96 frames per second, a situation where you'll need all the speed you can get. I'd also use the 800T for night exteriors. When you are running and gunning at night, why use a 500-speed film when an 800-speed stock looks just as good? For sunrise or sunset, an 800-speed film would allow me to begin earlier and work later, giving me a bit more time to capture those types of dramatic shots when light is provided by nature."

In adding another tool to the cinematographer's arsenal, Kodak is sure that Vision 800T will find an active role in modern film production techniques. "It is our experience that whenever we develop a new camera film, cinematographers always invent creative ways to use it that none of us anticipated," Aschman points out. "It will be intriguing to see how different cinematographers interpret the use of this film."

Vision 800T is currently only available in 35mm as 200-, 400-, and 1,000-foot loads, while Kodak is currently testing a 16mm version of the stock to determine the market's interest. "This film is an interesting step in a new direction," Ryan concludes, "but it is not the final word in how far we can push the science of film design and manufacturing. There is plenty of headroom for future progress."

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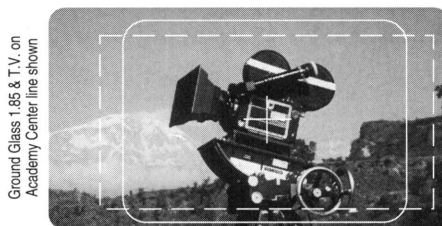
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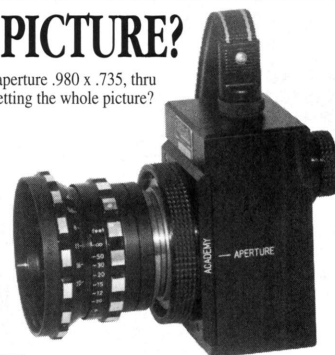
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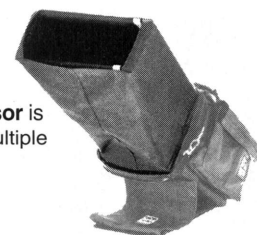
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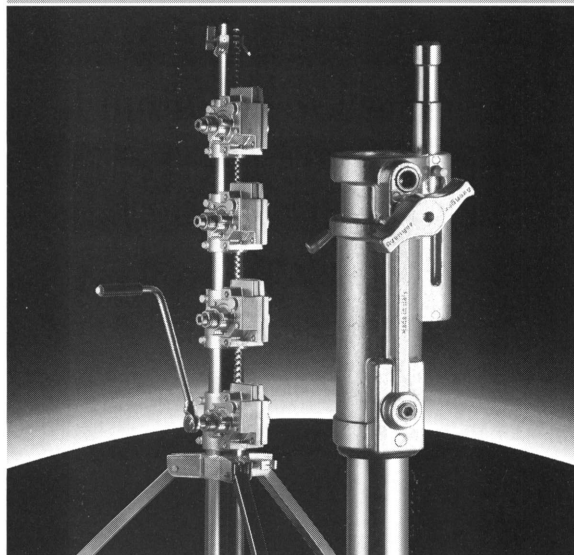


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Kodak's ScreenCheck Certification

Despite Eastman Kodak's continued efforts to improve the moviegoing experience — evidenced by the ongoing progress of their camera-origination, intermediate, and print films — the last critical link in this chain has, until now, gone unregulated. While filmmakers relentlessly strive to make films of the highest image quality, all of their efforts can be quickly undone by poor theater conditions: dirty screens, out-of-focus optics, and underpowered projection lamps.

However, Kodak is currently launching an ambitious exhibitor-certification program designed to ensure an optimum level of quality in every theater's viewing environment. This includes proper maintenance and calibration of both the projectors and sound reproduction systems, setting a maximum level of darkness in the theater by controlling ambient light from exit signs and other sources, and routine cleaning of the screen and the projection booth's port glass.

"Even if an audience doesn't know they are watching movies in a cinema optimized for high-quality projection, they are aware of enjoying the movie on that screen," says Sean Lohan, director of business development for theatrical distribution. "Our early surveys indicate that when a public sees a movie on a big screen with a brightly lit image in a sufficiently darkened environment, they find the experience more enjoyable. Many say they would even travel farther and pay a little more to see films on that screen."

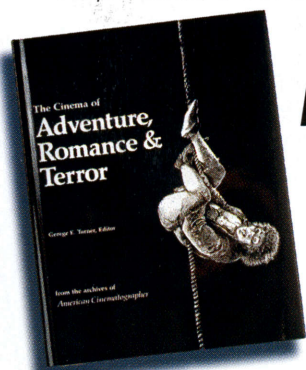
Kodak's ScreenCheck program will certify theaters that meet its rigorous standards and issue the theater advertising materials for lobby display. "We believe this will have real value for exhibitors," opines Lohan, "because the Kodak brand name is among the most trusted in the world and is widely recognized and associated with quality. We believe movie fans will make that association and recognize that the cinemas which have been certified by Kodak have

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Among films featured: *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, *The Bat*, *Wings*, *Bulldog Drummond*, *All Quiet on the Western Front*, *Dracula*, *Frankenstein*, *Creation*, *Tarzan*, *The Monkey's Paw*, *The Most Dangerous Game*, *White Zombie*, *The Lost Patrol*, *Bad Lands*, *The Black Cat*, *Crime Without Passion*, *Flash Gordon*, *Gunga Din*, *Cat People*, *Laura*, *Out of the Past*, *Rope*, *D.O.A.*, *Night of the Hunter*.

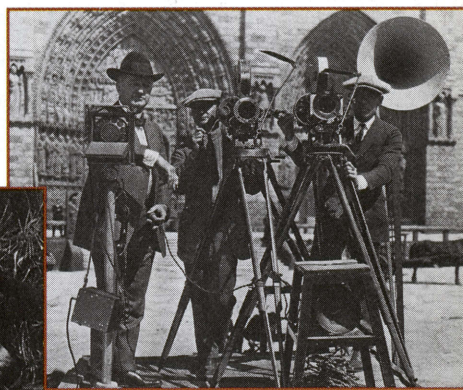
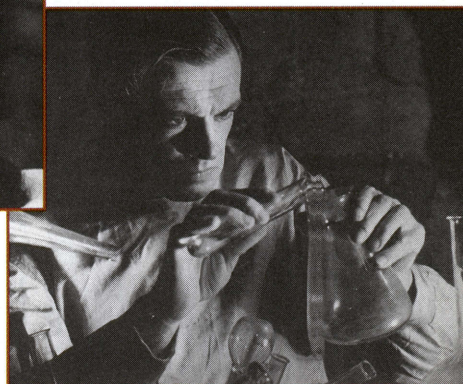


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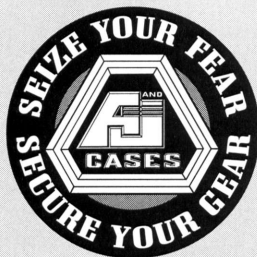
great screens."

Lohan notes that there are many cinemas that already meet the qualifications for the Kodak certification. Once a screen is certified, however, it will be revalidated up to nine times a year with Kodak's engineers measuring the brightness and evenness of the onscreen picture. This is to ensure that the screen can be masked for all possible aspect ratios with no cropping required, and that all sight-lines are clear. Additionally, Kodak's teams will measure the steadiness of the film running through the projector and see to it that the film itself is properly handled and cleaned.

With other parallel quality-assurance programs such as LucasFilm's THX sound certification, audiences now have the ability to view movies in the manner in which the filmmakers intended. "It's not about projecting pretty pictures," Lohan concludes. "It's about providing an environment where the audience can temporarily embrace a fantasy — to let the audience see the beauty and subtleties in the images captured on film. Details in colors, contrast and textures are all part of the story."

For additional information about Vision 2383, Vision Premier 2393, and Vision 800T 5289, contact your local Kodak representative. For additional information on the Kodak ScreenCheck program, contact Sean Lohan: (323) 468-4217, e-mail: slohan@kodak.com. ■

Releases regarding your company's latest product or service offerings may be sent to AC assistant editor Andrew Thompson at 1782 N. Orange Dr., Hollywood, CA 90028. Photos can be accepted as prints, slides or high-resolution digital files on disc (please call for specifications). Product releases can also be e-mailed to andrew_thompson@cineamatographer.com.



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Points East

High-Seas High Jinks

by Eric Rudolph

When the credit "Director of Photography Ken Kelsch" popped on the screen at the start of the 1997 culinary comedy *Big Night*, some in the East Coast film community were probably a bit surprised. After all, Kelsch — who was recently invited to join the ASC — had been practically joined at the hip to writer/director Abel Ferrara, whose dark, desperate themes in such films as *Bad Lieutenant* and *The Addiction* are far from *Big Night's* gentle, humorous tone.

In fact, *Big Night* was an important step for Kelsch, who

of Arthur (Tucci) and Maurice (Oliver Platt), two eccentric, unemployed, 1930s-era actors who are quite literally starving. But when their theatrical producer (Woody Allen in an unbilled cameo) learns that his wife has pulled



Top: Arthur and Maurice (Stanley Tucci and Oliver Platt) indulge in some slapstick. Above: Tucci and cameraman Ken Kelsch. Left: The film's comic cast on the ship set.

at that point had few other theatrical feature credits aside from his gritty work with Ferrara. Now the New York-based cinematographer has moved even farther away from that harsh, angst-soaked urban world. His current film, *The Impostors*, is the second effort from *Big Night* writer/co-director/star Stanley Tucci.

The Impostors is a hilariously successful updating of a genre Hollywood has so often tried, and usually failed, to revive: the period screwball comedy. The film follows the adventures

her financing and the show will not go on, Arthur and Maurice turn truly desperate.

The dramatic duo end up in a barroom fracas with Jeremy Burtrom (Alfred Molina), a pompous, successful actor they despise, and are chased by the police. Arthur and Maurice hide in a large basket by the docks, where they fall asleep — only to wake up on a cruise ship bound for Paris. Their thespian nemesis is also onboard, and is not in a forgiving mood. ➤

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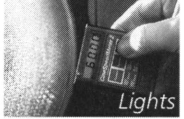
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So begins the fun, as the pair scamper about the ship trying to avoid capture. Along the way, they encounter a flamboyantly gay and energetically amorous tennis pro (Billy Connolly of *Mrs. Brown*) and a hilariously over-the-top German martinet (Campbell Scott), who is, of course, in charge of maintaining shipboard order.

Also onboard is Steve Buscemi as a terminally depressed crooner named Happy, Isabella Rossellini as a mysterious, deposed Queen and Tony Shaloub as a mad bomber. Lili Taylor, the ship's only staffer sympathetic to the boys, is delightful in her first role as an ingénue.

In fact, it was Taylor who brought Tucci and Kelsch together. "Lili was hassling *Big Night's* co-directors, Stanley Tucci and Campbell Scott, to hire me," says Kelsch. "She was in *The Addiction*, my favorite of the pictures Abel Ferrara and I have done from a photographic point of view. Of course, the six people dressed in black watching through their shades from the back row of the Angelica [theater in New York City] were the only other people who loved *The Addiction*," he jokes.

When *Big Night* came up, Kelsch "was very nervous and had nothing on my reel but scenes from Abel's films. At the *Big Night* meeting, all I did was tell amusing anecdotes about Madonna [who starred in Ferrara's 1993 picture *Dangerous Game*].

The fact that Kelsch's reel was filled with unsettling images didn't faze Tucci, who remembers, "It didn't matter that I didn't see anything similar to the look I was planning for *Big Night*. I'd seen *Bad Lieutenant* and I thought it was beautifully shot, more like a European film in its photographic style. Ken's work in *Bad Lieutenant* has a naturalistic feel, but it also has a sort of theatricality to it. I hate the slickness of American movies — I prefer truthful, unaffected lighting. Ken never tries to make anything beautiful. And he did a wonderful job on *Big Night*."

Despite the problems inherent in making an ambitious film for \$4 million

in 35 days, *Big Night* was a big success and Kelsch was again on board for *The Impostors*, which Tucci initially hoped would photographically resemble a Marx Brothers film. "I would've loved to have shot *The Impostors* in black-and-white," the filmmaker says. "We seriously considered it, but decided it would seem too self-conscious" and commercially limiting.

Once it was determined that *The Impostors* would be in color, Tucci's next direction to Kelsch was to "light it like a Marx Brothers movie." Kelsch studied such classics as *Duck Soup* (1933) and *A Night at the Opera* (1935), but says he found their photographic style to be a "broadly lit, traditional, manufactured, studio look. I knew I wouldn't be able to do that without going home from the set with a migraine every day."

However, Kelsch, who quips that he has "heard about fill light but I don't believe in it," took a cue from that old-Hollywood comedic look, using "more fill than I ever have. I think the fill ratio in *The Impostors* is probably pretty close to Kodak's guidelines, which for me is a first. With more fill and soft light, *The Impostors* was a good experience for me, a total departure from everything else I've done."

A key challenge for Kelsch was the Captain's Ball scene, where the various characters mix with disastrous results. The scene is long and full of movement, but had to be shot efficiently, given the \$8 million film's scant 35-day schedule. Toward that end, the cinematographer devised a simple, effective lighting approach that also gave the scene the warmth Tucci was after.

"I had six Maxi-Brutes on dimmers up on a grid. We used them for strong three-quarter backlight and then placed a 4' by 4' or 6' by 6' of unbleached muslin covered with light-chocolate gels next to the lens," Kelsch describes, who notes that this was the same approach he'd used to warm up scenes in *Big Night*. "Behind the muslin, we had a nine-light, placed fairly low to create a flattering fill without heavy eye sockets. We'd turn the bulbs on the nine-light on

and off as needed. This allowed us to work very quickly."

The Impostors may be a light, breezy softly lit comedy, but Kelsch's job was far from simple. "Stanley Tucci is a very ambitious director. There are never any small setups," attests the cameraman.

Tucci laughs goodnaturedly when this comment is related, but he agrees with his cinematographer: "I shoot a lot of masters, sometimes complicated ones; that comes from naiveté more than anything else." However, Tucci is not as naive about filmmaking as he might suggest. "I like the actors to have a real field to play in," the multi-hyphenate continues. "We used wider lenses and let things play in masters, and coverage was often fairly minimal. In *The Impostors*, most of the stateroom scenes are masters with few if any cutaways. These were small spaces where the walls couldn't be moved, so it was a challenge for everyone. However, I think you discover so much more from the actors and the camera when you let a scene run instead of chopping it up. When you have a lot of cuts, everything ends up with the same weight."

Despite the rigors of shooting these two modestly budgeted shows for Tucci, Kelsch has nothing but praise for his collaborator. "I really respect Stanley and I appreciate what he is trying to do. That inspires me to go the extra mile. I don't walk away from productions too often saying 'This guy is my friend.' Abel Ferrara is less like a friend and more like a dysfunctional brother. *The Impostors* was the most pleasant film I've ever worked on.

"I would look around at that cast — Lili, Woody Allen, Alfred Molina, Campbell, Isabella — and sometimes my jaw would just drop thinking about what these major talents were doing, probably for scale. Stanley is such a friend and so supportive of these people that they'll all do just about anything for him. That's the definition of leadership."

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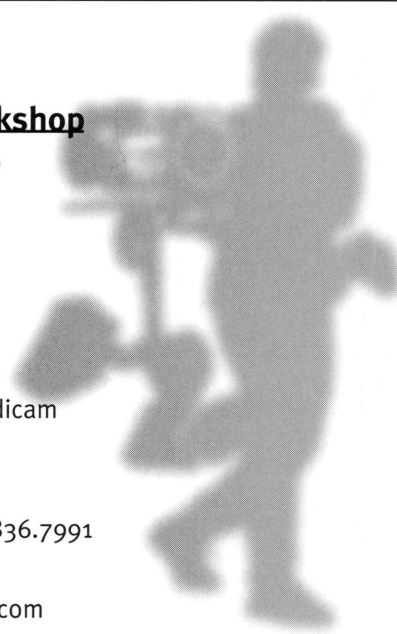
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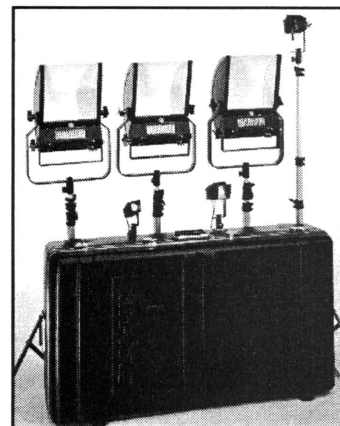
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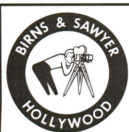
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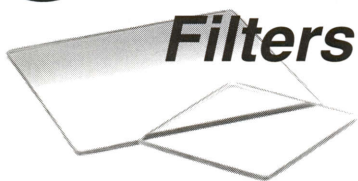
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Books in Review

by **George Turner**

**The New Historical
Dictionary of the
American Film**
by *Anthony Slide*
Scarecrow Press,
266 pps., hardback, \$55

An abundance of tomes about "Who's Who" in the movie industry has been published over the years, but this reference guide is more of a "What's What." The difference is all good, because the guide offers a handy reference to many subjects that would ordinarily require a great deal of research. For instance, this is the place to look if one wanted to know something about the Aywon Film Corporation or Prizma Color. There's also bibliography where further information on each topic can be found.

Arranged alphabetically are more than 800 subjects, including production and distribution companies (many are long-vanished entities such as Grand National, Mascot, Draco, etc.), industry guilds and organizations, important location sites, film labs, color processes, wide-screen processes, industry terms, technical innovations, genres, techniques and some surprising odds and ends.

This is an updated and greatly expanded version of Slide's landmark 1986 reference work *The American Film Industry: A Historical Dictionary*. The latest version, with more than 200 new entries and much revision, is an even better job — cold facts are written with understanding. There are even occasional flashes of humor, as when Slide explains that "Alan Smithee" is a substitute name used when a director doesn't want a credit, and then lists several films

attributed to Smithee. He concludes: "The 1997 production *An Alan Smithee Film* became an 'Alan Smithee' film when its director, Arthur Hiller, asked for his name to be removed."

**Smile When the
Raindrops Fall: The Story
of Charlie Chase**
by *Brian Anthony
and Andy Edmonds*
Scarecrow Press,
283 pps., Cloth. \$49.95

During the silent-film era, a considerable number of comedians plied their trade in the movies, mostly in short subjects. The public loved these shows, but the critics and intellectuals turned a cold shoulder to most, dismissing them with denigrating terms — "slapstick" and "low-brow" being chief among them. The only silent comedian who really rang the highbrows' bell was Charles Chaplin, sometimes referred to as "the only real genius on the screen." Genius yes, but far from alone. Eventually, pundits admitted that Buster Keaton and Harold Lloyd were also doing some nice work, earning them positions in the pantheon at the master's feet. Most others (including the popular favorites, Laurel and Hardy), were virtually ignored for decades, until it became too late for them to enjoy the fruits of their gifts — whereupon, suddenly, their genius became apparent. As more "sophisticated" verbal comedy became the rage, not many cinema clowns survived the "talkies," except as supporting players.

Charley Chase (1892-1940) is one of the great old-time comics who was touched by the cruel hand of genius but whose acceptance among the arbiters of

taste was delayed until a half-century after his death. Now there is a biography, written *con amor* by a pair of excellent researchers whose affection for their subject is evident. The book is also an impressive filmography.

Chase, whose real name was Parrott, was born in Baltimore and was working in vaudeville when he came to Hollywood in 1912. As a triple-threat actor/director/writer for Mack Sennett and, later, at Hal Roach and Columbia, he became an important influence in screen comedy. The careers of Laurel and Hardy, Thelma Todd, The Three Stooges and many others were influenced by Chase. After "talkies" arrived, he added singing, tap dancing and songwriting to his repertoire. Chase's onscreen persona was tall, thin and full of mischief. Offscreen, his tragic burdens included alcoholism and futile attempts to help his narcotics-addicted younger brother, Jimmy — himself a brilliant director gone to seed.

Plenty of rare photographs abound in this long-deserved, fine biography of Charley Chase.

Jacques Tourneur
by Chris Fujiwara
Foreword by
Martin Scorsese
McFarland & Co.,
328 pps.,
hardback, \$42.50

It's strange that Jacques Tourneur, a brilliant director of unusual sensitivity and taste, has never received greater recognition. Perhaps it's because some of his most distinguished work was done in the shadows of others. His father was the revered French director Maurice Tourneur, who also made important films in America. Though a great filmmaker, Maurice was a distant and rather cruel father. Even his worshipful assistant, Clarence Brown, had to admit, "He was cold. He had no heart." Jacques worked as a bit player and script clerk in Hollywood in the 1920s, but later returned to France, where he edited some of his father's films and directed four features.

After returning to Hollywood in 1934, he found work at MGM as a

second-unit director, most notably as the man behind the storming of the Bastille in *A Tale of Two Cities*. He directed 20 of MGMs celebrated dramatic short subjects from 1936-42; these were little gems, but charismatic narrators such as John Nesbitt and Pete Smith got the glory. Tourneur finally broke into feature direction. His fifth effort was RKO's modestly budgeted *Cat People* (1943), which was followed by *I Walked with a Zombie* and *The Leopard Man*. Even with these widely praised films, Tourneur was largely obscured by the shadow of the producer, Val Lewton. Still, the success of these pictures kicked Tourneur upstairs to bigger-budget shows, including *Experiment Perilous*, *Canyon Passage*, *Out of the Past*, *Berlin Express*, *Wichita*, *Nightfall*, and *Night of the Demon*.

Fujiwara has written a fine tribute to Tourneur, combining biography with close scrutiny of his films. Stylistic links between the projects are explored, beginning with the earliest examples. Even the short subjects and television episodes are given expansive coverage with full casts and credits. ■

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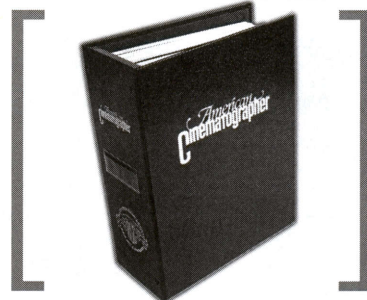
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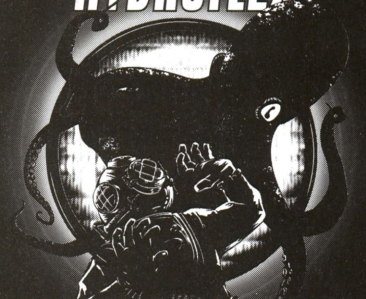
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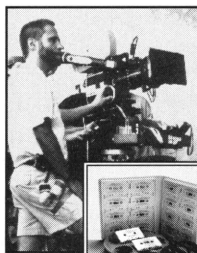
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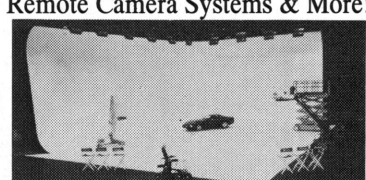


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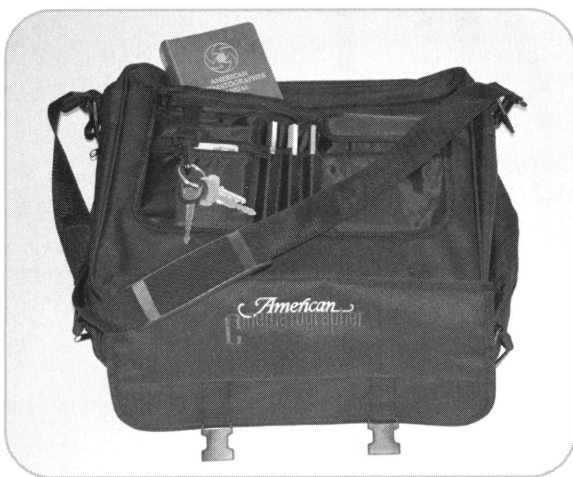
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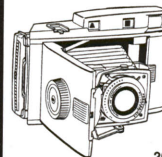
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In Memoriam

Eric Horvitch, ASC, SASC, the first South African director of photography to become a member of the ASC, died in his hometown of Johannesburg following heart surgery on August 10, 1998. The

77-year-old Horvitch had been a cameraman for 59 years and an ASC member since 1945. For many years, he was the only member of the Society to reside and work permanently on the African continent.

Born on May 3, 1922, Horvitch entered the field of moving pictures when he was 17, soon becoming foreman of Unifilms' lab and later establishing himself as a freelance cinematographer. He studied for six years at the University of Witwatersrand and the University of South Africa, earning Bachelor of Commerce and Bachelor of Economics degrees in Administration.

"All productions I have directed and photographed have been on special order only for universities, clubs, et cetera, or tribal films on special order for various bodies," Horvitch explained 52 years ago when he became an ASC member. That was during the time of World War II, an era marked by a severe shortage of equipment and film stock; as a result, production activities were closely regulated. "At all times I have acted as more or less a one-man unit," Horvitch added. "It's only now that restrictions on film have been released that I am going to produce other types of productions. This shall be as soon as my new studio and laboratory equipment arrives from America."

Horvitch is recognized as having played a major role in the development of the South African film industry. In addition to his pioneering work as a cinematographer, he established Photo Agencies of Southern Africa, one of the

nation's largest and most successful motion picture and photographic supply and service companies. In numerous instances he was the first to import and introduce the latest equipment and technological innovations to filmmakers throughout the region. Although photography was his life's work and Horvitch was seldom seen without a camera slung over his shoulder, he was also an ardent sportsman and assembled a notable collection of vintage firearms and ammunition.

A founding member of the South African Society of Cinematographers, for which he served as president for more than 30 years, Horvitch was also a member of the British Kinematographic Society and the Society of Motion Picture and Television Engineers. For many years he wrote extensively for the *SMPTE Journal*.

Horvitch is survived by his wife, Joan, and sons, Andrew and Martin. ■



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As film production continues to expand globally, *American Cinematographer*, the International Journal of Film & Digital Production Techniques for nearly 80 years, continues to expand as well. With international circulation at an all-time high and growing, *American Cinematographer* plans to sharpen its European editorial focus in 1999 with expanded coverage on a number of European fronts: film and TV production, postproduction, visual effects and related areas. Plan now to advertise and reach *American Cinematographer's* growing international audience.

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I certify that the statements made by me above are
correct and complete. — Jim McCullaugh, Publisher

From the Clubhouse



New Society Colleague

The ASC welcomes cinematogra-
pher Ken Kelsch as its newest active
member. A New York native, the camera-
man lives in New Jersey and works out
of New York City.

After serving as a Green Beret
during the Vietnam War, Kelsch received
his MFA from New York University's Film
& Television program in 1977. Two years
later, the cult-favorite horror feature
Driller Killer marked the beginning of his
career as director of photography, as well
as his long-standing working relationship
with director Abel Ferrara. The duo has
worked together on seven feature films,
including the harrowing *Bad Lieutenant*,
Dangerous Game, and *The Addiction*.
Kelsch has also worked on pictures for
television, including *Assault at West
Point* and *Condition Red* for Showtime,
Subway Stories and *Montana* for HBO,
the NBC pilot for *The Prosecutors*, and
numerous commercials and promos.

In 1997, Kelsch earned an Inde-
pendent Spirit Award nomination for his
cinematography in *The Funeral*, which
was also directed by Ferrara. His other
credits include the comedies *Big Night*
and *The Impostors* (see "Points East," p.
107), *New Rose Hotel*, and *Susan's Plan*.
Currently, he is shooting *Rear Window*, a
remake of the Hitchcock classic directed
by Jeff Bleckner and starring Christopher
Reeve. Kelsch is also experienced with
underwater cinematography and holds a
black belt in Tae Kwon Do.

Robertson Passes Away

We're sad to report that associate
member Toni Robertson died on August
27 from complications caused by
leukemia. Besides being affiliated with
the ASC, she was also an associate
member of the Society of Operating
Cameramen.

Robertson joined the film industry
by following in the footsteps of her
father, Scott Robertson, who spent many

years working for Eastman Kodak in
Hollywood. Toni began her career as a
sales representative for Agfa film before
accepting a similar position at Kodak.
Her role with both companies involved
working with cinematographers and
independent filmmakers.

Robertson played an active role
with Women in Film, and was also a
strong supporter of the Independent
Feature Project/West. In 1996, the Los
Angeles Feature Film Festival presented
her with a special tribute for her long-
standing support of independent film-
makers.

Robertson will be fondly remem-
bered by the many people whose lives
she touched: those who received a help-
ing hand from her at critical times in their
careers, when they were just starting out
or when others wouldn't address their
needs. She is survived by her mother,
Louise West, a stepmother, Joan Robert-
son, a sister, Holle Robertson, and half
brothers Ron and Steven West.

A memorial service in Robertson's
honor was held at Kodak's Hollywood
headquarters on September 10. Those
wishing to make donations in her name
should forward them to the following
organizations: Wellness Community,
2716 Ocean Park Blvd., Suite 1040, Santa
Monica, CA 90405; or Leukemia Society
of America, 100 Corporate Point, Suite
180, Culver City, CA 90230.

ASC Awards coverage

The 13th annual ASC Awards
gala will be held on Sunday, February 21
at the Century Plaza Hotel in Los Ange-
les. The careers of the evening's Lifetime
and International Award winners will be
saluted in the February and March 1999
issues of *AC*, respectively. Profiles of the
television nominees (regular series,
movie of the week and miniseries) will
appear in the May issue, while nominees
in the feature-film category will be
covered in our June edition. ■

WRAP SHOT



Above: Devlin (James Fox) finds himself submitting to the seductive wiles of Pherber (Anita Pallenberg). Right: Turner (Mick Jagger) dashes off a musical memo.

"Do you know who you are?" is the query repeatedly posed to seemingly macho gangster Chas Devlin (James Fox) in the 1970 film *Performance*, a bizarre excursion to Swinging London which was co-directed by Donald Cammell and Nicholas Roeg, BSC. Roeg doubled as director of photography to lend the picture its amazing array of trippy Technicolor images.

A distant cousin to Michelangelo Antonioni's *Blow-Up* (1966), *Performance* tracks Devlin's descent from London's seedy criminal scene into a Dionysian netherworld populated by rock 'n' roll hedonists. The sadistic Devlin is a "performer" — British mob lingo for an enforcer — but one day he takes his love of the job just a bit too far. Shirking the orders of bookie boss Harry Flowers (John Shannon), Devlin murders a rival racketeer and former friend. On the lam from the coppers and his corrupt colleagues, Devlin flees to the funky

Notting Hill district.

There, the beleaguered thug seeks sanctuary in a basement flat owned by washed-up pop icon Turner (played with amoral gusto by Rolling Stone frontman Mick Jagger, right), a fey androgyne coping with the loss of his creative muse by indulging in a sordid sabbatical of sex and substance abuse. In the larger frame shown above, Devlin gets the night-nurse treatment from Pherber (Anita Pallenberg, then the girlfriend of Rolling Stone guitarist Keith Richards), who, along with French waif Lucy (Michele Breton) participates in the film's madcap *ménage à quatre*.

After Pherber garnishes Devlin's dinner with a magic mushroom, Roeg lets loose with some truly abstract images. His deft mix of psychedelic hues, quick cuts, shallow focus, superimposed shots and quease-inducing zooms led one reviewer to remark, "Witnessing Roeg's unruly visual style is like being

trapped in a cave filled with flying bats."

By this time, Roeg had already established himself as a uniquely talented cameraman with a resumé that included Roger Corman's *The Masque of the Red Death*, Francois Truffaut's *Fahrenheit 451*, John Schlesinger's *Far from the Madding Crowd* and Richard Lester's *Petunia*. Nevertheless, Warner Brothers executives found *Performance*'s radical visuals — not to mention its nonlinear narrative — so perplexing that its theatrical distribution was held up for nearly two years after its completion while the powers-that-be re-edited the picture.

Roeg also did double duty on another 1970 release, *Walkabout*, a tale of two children lost in the lusciously photographed Australian outback. Soon after, he helmed two more adventurous efforts, *Don't Look Now* and *The Man Who Fell to Earth*. The latter film, a sci-fi allegory about alienation, starred pansexual poster boy David Bowie, whose onstage antics as glam-rocker Ziggy Stardust would, along with *Performance*, eventually influence Todd Haynes's *Velvet Goldmine* (see feature story on page 30).

— Andrew O. Thompson



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